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Preliminary Report No. 4

EXISTING FORM and IMAGE

San Francisco Department of City Planning
January 1970

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THE PRELIMINARY URBAN DESIGN STUDY REPORTS

This report is the fourth of a planned series of eight preliminary reports of the San Francisco Urban Design Study. The objective in issuing these reports is to insure that the public and concerned civic leaders are informed of each phase of the study.

The first report introduced the urban design study, outlined the scope of the study, and included selected background data. This was followed by a report on existing urban design plans and policies summarizing past design efforts by the City and what is, in effect, the existing urban design plan for San Francisco. The third preliminary report deals with general goals, policies, and objectives that will guide the formulation of the Urban Design Plan and includes a brief summary of recent surveys assessing public concerns about the environment.

The purpose of this report is to describe and analyze the existing natural and man-made physical form elements of the City, including its relationship to the immediate surrounding region. This material will form the basis for the urban design proposals to be prepared in subsequent stages.

Future reports will cover urban design principles, effectuation and the city-wide urban design plan and policies for San Francisco. A special report will be issued on the Social Plan Reconnaissance Study. The social studies, a part of that study, formed an input into the urban design plans and policies.

INTRODUCTION

The primary concern of urban design is the three-dimensional physical environment. To effectively develop urban design plans for making the city a more pleasing, functional and interesting place to live, for present and future populations, information about the existing form, character, and quality of the urban environment is required.

The Existing Form and Image Report is, in effect, a shorthand record of the significant things people see and experience as they move through and about the city. The studies presented provide an evaluation of the quality of San Francisco's environment and a source of design information for the development of urban design proposals and policies. They present a visual analysis of the elements that give form, pattern, and identity to the parts of the city.

Compared with many cities, San Francisco is not very large. However, within its 47 square miles are many complex and varied subareas and communities set within an equally complex landscape. Impressions of any given place in the city are colored by a multitude of factors: the views, traffic, activity of people, stores, signs, architecture, landscape, to name but a few. Describing something so complex, and multifaceted in a useful form becomes a critical problem.

To obtain a compact source of information for easy reference, the description of the three-dimensional form, character, and quality of the city must be reduced to two dimensions and placed on maps and pages of a report. The obscuring details must be eliminated and only the essential characteristics retained.

In the studies emphasis has been placed on the most significant visual aspects of the urban form. Obscuring details have been eliminated from the analysis and from the material presented. Attention has been focused, also, on those aspects of the physical environment that lend themselves to clear identification and measurement. It was also a continuing concern that the preciseness of measurements and definitions be appropriate to the subject matter. This was done to minimize subjectivity and facilitate consistency.

In an effort to assure that the concerns and perceptions of the public were taken into account, a number of surveys of public opinions and attitudes about the urban environment were made. The surveys explored what people in different areas of the city were concerned about in their neighborhoods, how traffic affected their lives, and what they thought about their parks. Information gained through the surveys was helpful in orienting staff evaluation of the physical environment to the values and concerns of San Francisco residents.

Hopefully, then, the description of the form, character and environmental quality of the City presented in this report is one most readers will find reasonable and acceptable as a basis for the preparation of urban design plans and policies.

SURVEY APPROACH

San Francisco is a city of hills and streets lined by buildings. For the most part the buildings -- lined up side by side with no intervening spaces -- form a solid street facade. The streets, as a result, are channels of space cutting through an apparently solid mass of buildings. Except for small areas around Twin Peaks, St. Francis Woods, and Forest Hills, the grid pattern was laid over the hills without variation. The higher and more precipitous the hill the more quickly and dramatically the buildings drop away opening up broad views of the city.

The hills of San Francisco result in two different ways of viewing the city: the sweeping panorama from the hilltops contrasting with the enclosed streetscape below. Depending upon the situation, interest shifts from the skyline and the sculptural form of the city to the architectural facade of a given block. A second factor that radically affects the way the city is seen depends on whether it is viewed on foot or from a moving vehicle. The motorist is confronted with a rapid sequence of impressions. A typical trip might include a quick glimpse of the downtown in the distance followed by a

confusion of signs and activities followed by yet another set of impressions in rapid succession. The pedestrian sees and experiences a different world composed of details, where changes evolve at a more comfortable pace.

Mode of travel and the opportunity for city views have a strong influence on the kinds of things people will notice and look at. When riding in a car, the driver or passenger will consciously orient himself to where he is by the distinctive features and characteristics associated with different areas. Less consciously, perhaps, areas are also identified by their general quality. The presence or absence of street trees and landscaping, the cleanliness of the street, maintenance of houses, and myriad similar small things add up to a total impression often as telling as a familiar landmark.

Four survey techniques -- representing four different ways of looking at the city -- were used: 1) Quality of Environment, 2) Internal Pattern and Image, 3) Road Environment, and 4) External Form and Image. The survey methods are complementary, each describes a dimension of the urban environment the others lack.

1. Quality of Environment Survey

The objective of this survey is to provide an evaluation of the relative quality of the physical environment for every

part of the city. The survey was directed toward defining, in broad terms, the kinds of physical deficiencies that currently exist in the city as well as indicating their intensity and location. The data provided will permit the comparison of any one block with another if desired or the delineation of broad patterns of deficiencies.

Nine environmental factors were evaluated. They were selected for their applicability to all parts of the city and for making future policy decisions. A requirement of the factors surveyed was that they should be evaluated independently of other issues, and the criteria for assigning values be defined with reasonable clarity. The environmental factors surveyed included Quality of Maintenance, Quality of View, Visual Interest of Street Facade, Block Variation, Distance to Open Space, Presence of Nature, Compatibility of Traffic, Clarity of Local Image, and Micro-Climate. Ratings were made in a block-by-block field survey of the City, supplemented in certain instances by additional research. The record of quality of views down streets is anticipated to be of particular value in determining where street views merit special protection.

2. Internal Pattern and Image Survey

The Internal Pattern and Image Survey looks at the City from the street level recording those special features, landmarks, and activities that give visual pattern and structure to the

local areas of the city. The survey focuses on those things people use to orient themselves, to locate their destinations, and to mark progress through the city, such as: a unique building with an ornate facade, a church spire rising above the housetops, a shopping street bustling with activity, or a major thoroughfare with speeding cars. These are the physical elements that help define what people think of as "their" neighborhood or community.

Four kinds of factors that contribute to the visual order of the city and its various districts are recorded: 1) Prominent or distinctive structures and natural features, 2) Activity and movement patterns such as shopping areas, community facilities, centers of pedestrian activity and streets that are distinguished from others by noticeably heavy volumes of traffic; 3) Strong physical elements such as an elevated freeway or a particularly strong continuous building facade fronting on an open space; and 4) Areas having a noticeably consistent architectural character.

In addition, the primary physical assets of each planning area in the city were identified along with design problems and opportunities for change.

3. Road Environment Survey

Many people see more of San Francisco from a car than on foot.

It is not uncommon for many residents to spend an hour or more of their lives each day traveling from home to work. A typical trip in the city will include panoramic glimpses of the city from hilltops interspersed by sequences of enclosed streetscapes. Much of our overall impression of the city may be built up from many such linear excursions along San Francisco's arterial streets and freeways.

The pleasure and satisfaction of driving and riding about the city depends upon many factors. Even the most beautiful setting cannot be enjoyed if one does not feel safe, the roadway is uncomfortably narrow, or traffic conditions require constant attention. Monotonous roadways can be tiring. Equally, streets with too many signs and visual clutter can also wear the driver down. The Road Environment Survey is designed to retrieve the necessary data for the development of urban design solutions to problems along arterial streets.

Surveying while traveling at typical road speeds requires special survey techniques. A combination of motion-picture films and taped commentary were used. Field notes and still photographs supplemented the records made from a moving vehicle. The arterial streets have been analyzed in two ways: 1) schematic maps describing the view from the road, the character of the roadway, its visual structure, and relation to the city's

major physical features and destination, 2) an evaluation of the quality of the roadway by selected criteria such as maintenance, spaciousness, order, monotony, clarity, and safety. The evaluation of roadway quality provides a basis for assigning priorities for corrective action and indicates the general kinds of design problems involved. The descriptive maps are more specific, identifying such things as important vistas that should be preserved, confusing intersections, and important landmarks for driver orientation.

4. External Form and Image Survey

Where the Internal Pattern and Image Survey looked at the city from the street between building masses, the External Form and Image Survey examines the broad overviews of the city, the great panoramic views over extensive areas of the city as seen from the hills. It looks at the sculptural form of the city and analyzes the composition of the views and the relation of man-made features to the natural land forms.

The views of the city are perhaps the most prized feature of San Francisco. In the past we have tended to take them for granted; development in recent years has shown how fragile and easily damaged they can become. A primary objective of the survey is to provide a basis for determining where and what aspects of the city form should be protected, enhanced or

radically changed or, for that matter, where it may not be important what form future development may take.

Panoramic photographs taken at key locations within the city and immediate surrounding areas supplemented by oblique aerial photographs provided the data base. The significant compositional elements and form of each view were identified together with an evaluation of what makes it pleasing, indifferent, or disturbing. The analysis will lead in the next phase to the formulation of specific urban form recommendations.

The essentially different viewpoints of the four surveys result in some cases in conflicting evaluations of the same situation. A shopping street, for example, may be a delight to the pedestrian but a nuisance to the driver. No attempt has been made at this time to resolve such differences, that is the next task. The surveys are presented as separate studies which, in substance, may overlap and interrelate.

The four surveys together form the most comprehensive record available of the physical form and environment of San Francisco. This is not to say they are all inclusive. Time and resources required the Existing Form and Image Study to be selective. However, one way or another, the component surveys have covered the most significant and useful information about San Francisco's physical environment.

QUALITY OF THE ENVIRONMENT SURVEY

PURPOSE: This survey provides a relative basis for comparison of environmental factors in different neighborhoods. It shows in broad terms the kinds of physical problems or deficiencies that currently exist, and provides a foundation for assigning priorities to those areas requiring improvement. Such a survey is meant to provide a general background to the more specific pattern and image surveys comprising subsequent sections of this report. As a broad background it does show in its own right a simple graphic picture of the extent and relative intensity of city-wide environmental problems, and it does indicate how different kinds of positive and negative factors combine, sometimes to reinforce or offset each other.

THE SURVEY: This survey is based on an evaluation of the salient features in a block, in short, what an individual sees and reacts to. The charts which follow are the synthesis of scores assigned to either an area of the city or each of its blocks. These scores came from evaluating each area or block according to nine "environmental factors". In turn, each of these factors was graded on a five-point scale which ranges from "low or bad" to "high or excellent". This combination of nine environmental factors and the five-point rating scale provides an adequate and efficient method for evaluating each block of the city. The field survey work was performed by

members of the Urban Design Study Team in the San Francisco Department of City Planning. Additional information on the methodology used in evaluating each block and in selecting the system of evaluation is contained in the appendix to this section labelled, "Notes on Methodology".

THE ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS: A total of nine environmental factors contributing to the overall quality of environment were chosen. The criteria which led to their selection from the many possible factors were:

1. They must be pertinent to the environmental concerns of the public.
2. They should be useful to designers and planners.
3. They must be applicable to all parts of the city.
4. They must be visible and easily observed.

Only the first six of the nine factors listed are present in this report. The other four are included either in a "summary" score, or are the subject matter of a separate report. These nine factors and a brief definition of their range and interpretation are as follows:

1. Quality of Maintenance: The level of maintenance of the street, its sidewalks, and the yards and buildings which front on it as indicated by their relative cleanliness, repair, or upkeep.

2. Quality of View: The quality of the view as seen by the pedestrian, and evaluated with respect to the extent composition, and importance of the view.

3. Visual Interest of Street Facade: The degree of visual interest found in the street facade as measured by the architectural character, landscaping, and

variation of building forms and patterns.

4. Block Variation: The range of variety within an area indicated by the difference of individual blocks from surrounding ones.

5. Distance to Public Open Space: The evaluation of an area as indicated by the amount of walking distance between the area and public open space and recreation areas.

6. Presence of Nature: The quantity and quality of natural elements such as trees, shrubbery, flowers, grass and water within or visible from the block.

7. Compatibility of Traffic. The degree of conflict or harmony between the volume of traffic, the size and design of the street and the land uses along the street (included in Summary Evaluation - to be the subject matter of a future, separate report).

8. Clarity of Local Image: Factors which relate to this evaluation are: the visibility of its boundaries, the uniqueness of its architecture, the distinction of its land forms, and the district's cultural significance (included in the Summary Evaluation, but not presented as a separate Plate because it is a product of the evaluation of many blocks).

9. Micro-climate: The quality of neighborhood weather as evaluated by the frequency of sunny days, high wind velocities, and fog (presented earlier in Preliminary Report #1).

A SUMMARY EVALUATION, combining the scores of the first eight factors, provides an overall basis for determining area needs for environmental improvement. The Summary Evaluation and the scoring procedure used in preparing it is presented following the maps of the individual factors.

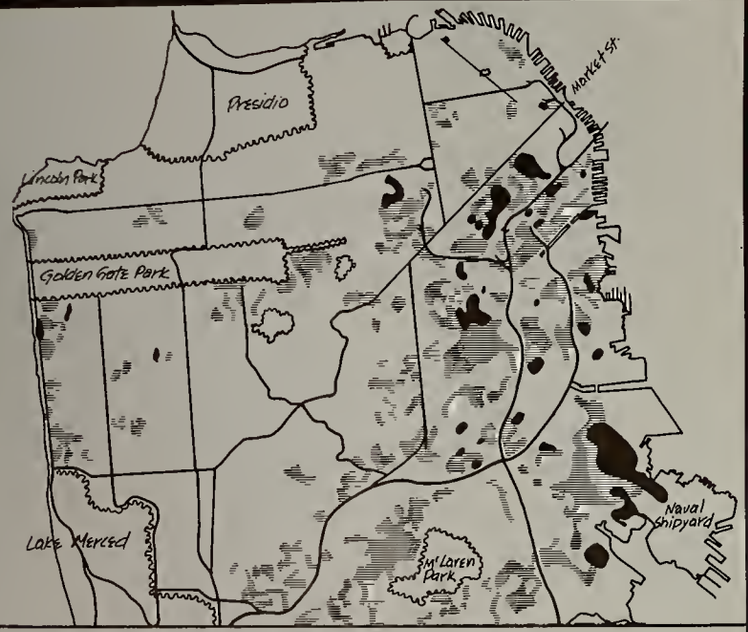
THE RATING SCALE: Each of the nine "Environmental Factors" was graded on a 5-point scale. Ratings of "Average" or above are considered a favorable evaluation; ratings of "Below Average" or lower indicate serious deficiencies.

The scale is as follows:

1. = high or superior condition	
2. = above average or good	favorable evaluation
3. = average or neutral condition	
4. = below average or poor	unfavorable evaluation
5. = low or bad condition	

While all of the first nine environmental factors were graded using this 5-point system, only the lowest two scores (below average and low) are shown in graphic section of this report. This is done for reasons of graphic clarity as well as for the purpose of underscoring those areas of city which have the most serious deficiencies. The (1) high, (3) average, and (5) low ratings for the first six factors are illustrated on the following page.

The maps presenting the Environmental Factors on the following pages are generalized from the pattern of individual block scores. The shaded and solid areas are where clusters of similar ratings are found. An isolated block rated poor in an otherwise highly rated area thus would not be indicated; conversely, individual blocks of higher rating may occur within the shaded or solid areas.



QUALITY OF MAINTENANCE

below average — low

CRITERIA: Cleanliness and state of repair of sidewalks, street, yards and buildings.

IMPORTANCE: Quality of maintenance is an indicator of well-being and status. To many, particularly homeowners, it is one of the most important physical characteristics of a good residential area. When a neighbor maintains his house and yard in a substandard manner, he is, in effect, attacking the investment of time and money by those living about him. Clean, well-maintained streets and yards are a symbol of neighborhood pride and concern. Littered and dirty streets are regarded by many as a threat to the health of residents.

The second most frequently mentioned physical characteristic cited as important by San Franciscans was "maintenance of homes and yards."* Only "safe intersections" -- whose lack would be a direct threat to life -- were mentioned more often.

COMMENT: When people living along a street cease to care about it, sidewalks may go unswept, yards uncared for. Where traffic volume appears to contribute to neighborhood deterioration, efforts should be made to make the street more livable and attractive for residents. Often, heavy traffic can lead to a withdrawal by people from the street. The larger the volume of traffic, the more a street belongs to automobiles and the less it is perceived as belonging to the people.

Low ratings for these criteria are concentrated along the Misstion Street corridor. High population density is found together with low ratings for maintenance in the South of Market, Central Mission, and Hayes Valley areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Increased public street maintenance should be given first consideration in those areas receiving low "quality of maintenance" ratings, particularly for areas characterized by high population density, overcrowding, and high ratios of renter occupancy.

Public maintenance should be increased along heavily used roadways in low-maintenance areas. Improvements along the traffic-ways, such as installation of landscaped buffer strips, reduction of traffic volume and/or speed should be an integral part of any public maintenance program.

Block or sub-neighborhood scaled street improvement programs including more frequent scheduling of street cleaning, tree planting, and other improvements within the public right of way should be considered to stimulate private efforts in high home-ownership areas with low ratings in "quality of maintenance."

QUALITY OF VIEW

Note: Major streets are shown by solid continuous line. View rating applies next to these streets.

below average — low

CRITERIA: The breadth, extent, composition of view and the significance of objects viewed from the street.

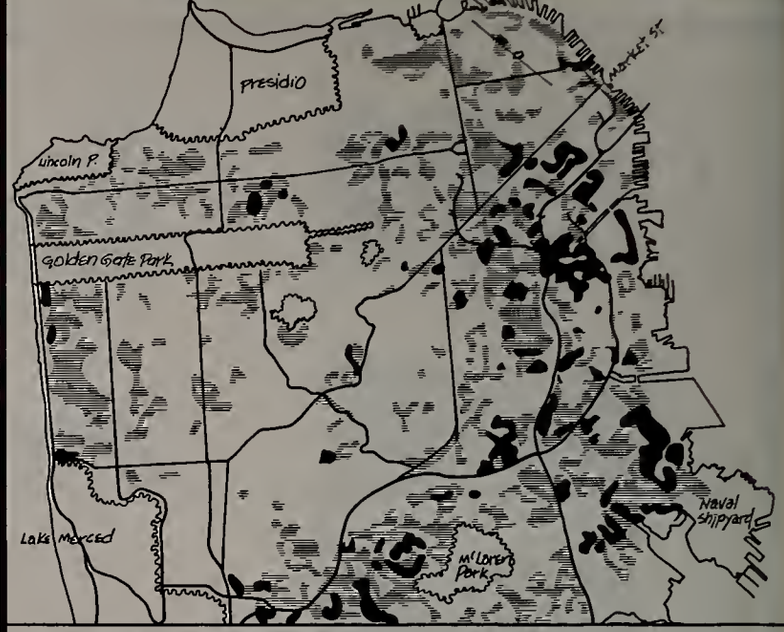
IMPORTANCE: Good views are valued for many reasons -- for their innate beauty and the psychological sense of open space they impart to a crowded city. They may compensate for the dullness of the immediate setting or for the lack of trees and landscaping in an area. To a considerable degree, the quality of view determines a neighborhood's status. Areas with the best views with few exceptions have become the most desirable residential locations.

COMMENT: The absence of a view frequently coincides with and intensifies environmental deficiencies. Most areas of the City have average or better views in at least one direction. Inner Mission contains the largest area of low -rated views in any direction. In some cases buildings along low-rated streets may have good views from upper or rear windows. This is particularly true along curvilinear streets.

In areas with poor views, more emphasis is placed upon the quality of the immediate setting. When this occurs, visual interest of street facade and block variation become more important factors.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Higher priority for street improvements should be given to those areas which have received low ratings for "sense of nature", "visual interest of street facade", and "block variation", and are also low in respect to views. Emphasis should be upon improvements within the public right of way which add to the interest, distinctiveness, and sense of nature.

Above average street views and vistas of trees and green open space should be protected from development that might block these views. (Note: High and above average views are presented in Section 2 of this report.)



VISUAL INTEREST OF STREET FACADE

below average — low

CRITERIA: Variety of building types, architectural character, landscaping, scale, colors and pattern.

IMPORTANCE: The visual richness of a street -- the amount of interesting and pleasing details -- affects the enjoyment of the street as a place for children to play and adults to walk and meet with friends. A bland, dull shopping area will certainly help dampen the pleasure of a shopping trip just as a pleasant, interesting street can make a routine chore more enjoyable.

"Attractiveness of streets and buildings" was the seventh most frequently mentioned factor as an important physical characteristic by San Franciscans. Items relating to safety, maintenance, and open space were considered to be more important.

COMMENT: Hills and open space consistently generate high ratings. The street facades of those buildings on hillsides are more interesting, more varied through their adaptation to sloping land. Landscaped open space sets up a strong contrast with adjacent development and offers new ways of looking at otherwise typical street fronts.

Areas of the City characterized by low maintenance but with high ratings for visual interest of street facade are more likely to have a potential for self renewal. Such areas can usually be made more attractive with relatively little effort.

RECOMMENDATIONS: In areas rated low in "visual interest", greater emphasis should be given to distinctive, highly visible improvements. High-rated blocks located within low-maintenance areas should be reviewed for possible community self-improvement programs.

Those areas of the City deficient in open space which also receive low ratings for both "visual interest of street facade" and "block variation" should be given high priority for open space development within the public right of way.

QUALITY OF ENVIRONMENT SURVEY: DEFICIENT AREAS

* FROM SOCIAL RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY, FALL, 1969, A SOCIAL/ENVIRONMENTAL INTERVIEW SURVEY CONDUCTED BY MARSHALL KAPLAN, GANS AND KAHN FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING AS A PART OF THE URBAN DESIGN ST

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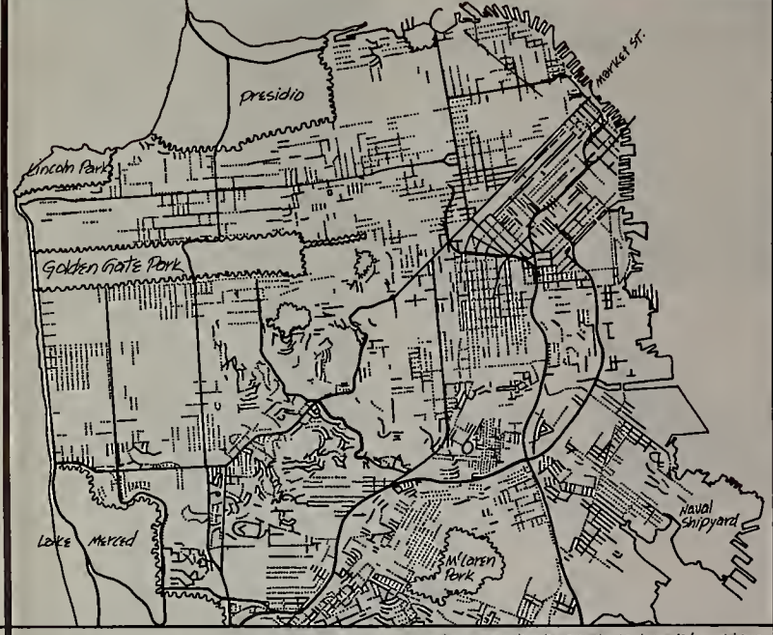

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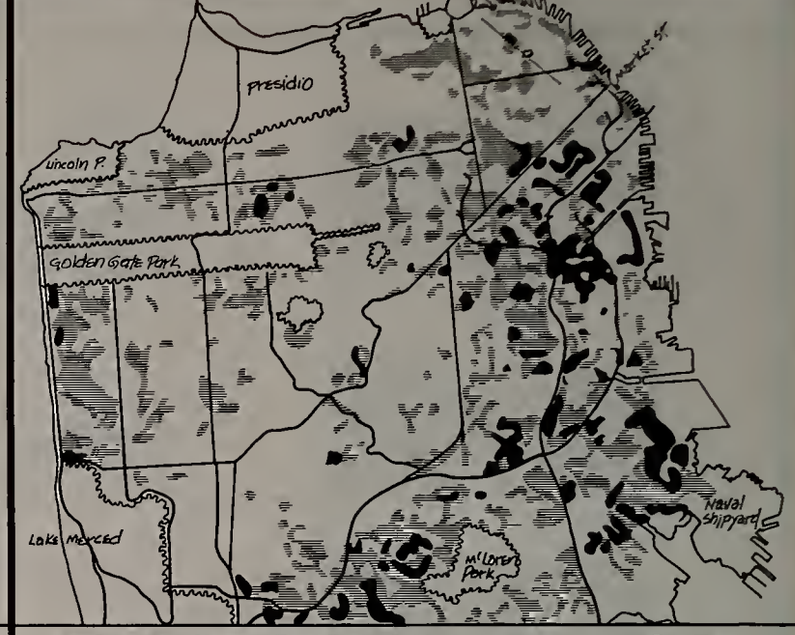

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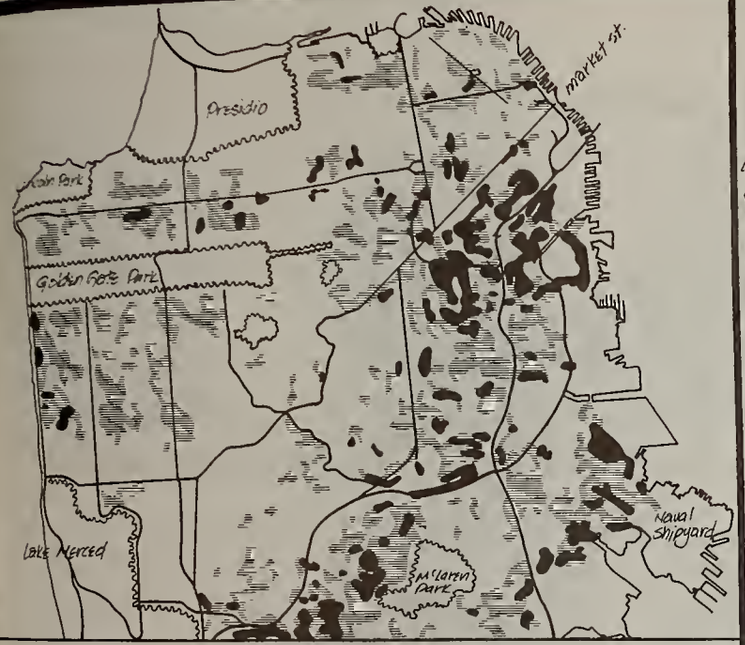


BLOCK VARIATION

below average low

CRITERIA: The degree of distinction or difference of a block from surrounding blocks.

IMPORTANCE: Variation in appearance between blocks is an indication of the amount of variety within an area of the City. Without variety the development pattern can become repetitious and monotonous. If a lack of variation between blocks is accompanied by the absence of interesting details within each block, it usually indicates a bland, often impersonal environment.

"Block variation" is related to "attractiveness of streets and buildings" the seventh most frequently mentioned physical characteristic considered important by San Franciscans.* It is an attribute valued only after the more basic concerns related to safety, maintenance, and accessible open space.

COMMENT: The pattern of high and low ratings for "block variation" parallels the pattern for "visual interest of street facade." There are differences in the patterns but not extreme ones. When these two environmental factors are combined, they become a better measure of the design richness of an area than either one alone. Where their low ratings coincide, highly visible improvements of a distinctive nature are desirable. South Central, Inner Mission, and South Bayshore have the most extensive areas marked by low ratings for both categories of "block variation" and "visual interest of street facade."

RECOMMENDATIONS: First consideration should be given to the areas which contain the most extensive coincidence of low scores in both "block variation" and "visual interest of street facade."

Emphasis in these areas might be given to street improvements that add interest to the streetscape and contribute to a sense of community structure.

PRESENCE OF NATURE

below average low

CRITERIA: The quantity and quality of natural elements -- such as trees, shrubbery, flowers, grass, and water -- within and visible from the block.

IMPORTANCE: In an intensely urbanized environment, the presence of nature is an important factor. Evidence of this value is seen in the most prestigious and expensive residential areas which, without exception, rate high in "presence of nature." This value comes in part because of the harshness found in a world of only buildings, pavement, and automobiles. In the absence of open space, landscaping can help make the City satisfying. Views of green hills in the distance are a form of psychological open spce that can in part compensate for the lack of nearby open space.

"Street trees and other planting" was the sixth most frequently mentioned physical characteristic by San Franciscans.* While factors relating to safety, maintenance, and open space were mentioned more often, concern for landscaping is implicit in "maintenance of houses and yards" and in "nearby small parks and places to sit."

COMMENT: South of Market, Central Mission, Midtown Residential, and West Nob Hill are the most extensive areas with low ratings. These areas are characterized by high residential densities and insufficient open space.

In blocks without any landscaping, the buildings, pavement, overhead wires, and vehicles are visually dominant and unrelieved. Under such circimstances the adverse effect is intensified by dull street fronts, littered streets, and heavy traffic.

RECOMMENDATIONS: High priority for street tree planting and landscaping should be given to areas having low ratings for "presence of nature" and low ratings for any or all of the following factors: "Distance to open space", "visual interest of street facade", "quality of maintenance", and "compatibility of traffic." First consideration should be given to those areas where all or most of these factors have low scores.

DISTANCE TO OPEN SPACE

below average low

CRITERIA: Walking distance to open space modified by size and variety of facilities within park.

IMPORTANCE: In an intensely developed city like San Francisco, open space is extremely important. It provides a change of pace and relief from the world of concrete and asphalt. People go to parks to rest, relax and recuperate from the stresses of city living.

Green open space provides variety and contrast to the cityscape. It helps to define areas of the City and is often a focal point within neighborhoods. Because they are distinctive breaks in the urban pattern, parks may impart a strong sense of place and identity to the surrounding area.

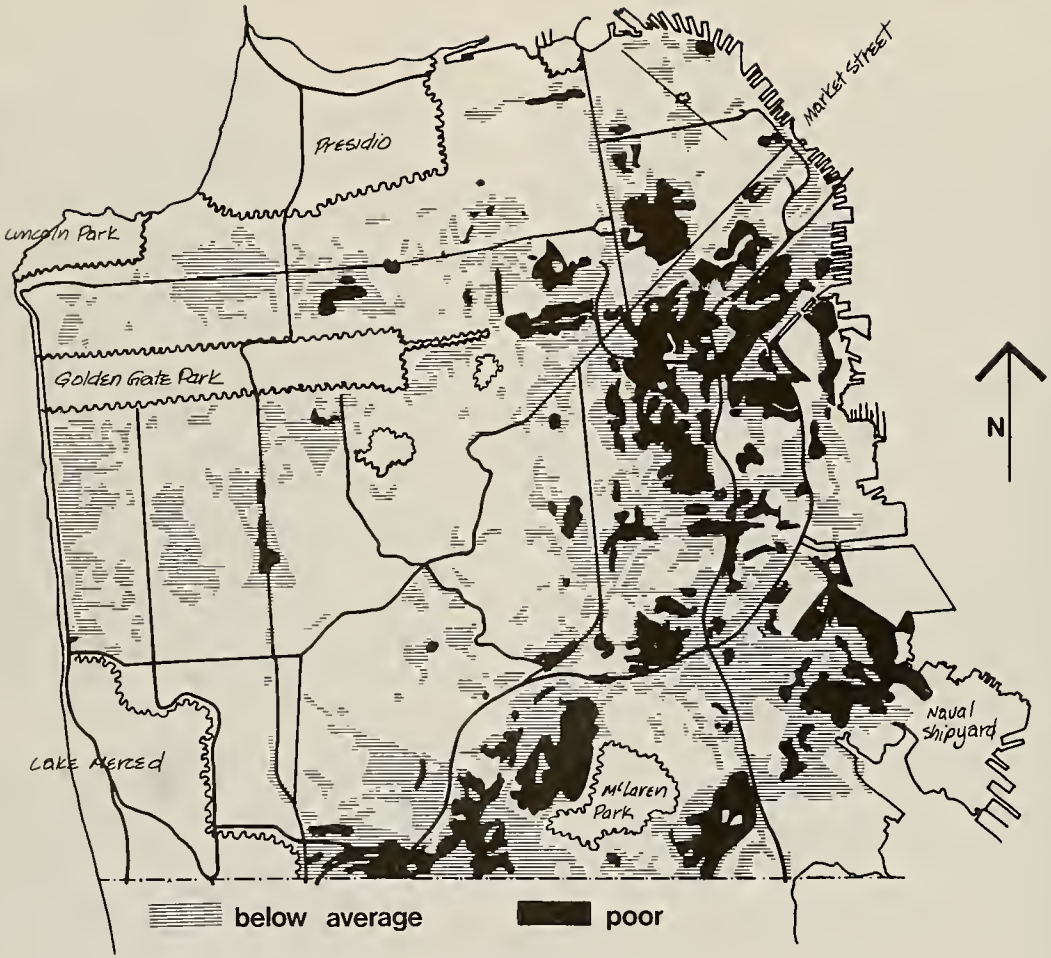
"Nearby small parks and places to sit" was the third most frequently mentioned desirable physical characteristic by San Franciscans in a recent survey.*

COMMENT: Those areas of the City with the greatest population density -- Chinatown, West Nob Hill, Central Mission, and South of Market -- are the most deficient in public open space. These same areas also have the heaviest concentrations of the poor, very young, and elderly, and because of their lack of mobility are most adversely affected by the scarcity of accessible open space.

The major park areas are located in the western one-half of the City where more families have their own private backyards and their own cars.

RECOMMENDATIONS: First consideration for the provision of new open space in the City should be given to those low-rated areas which also have high population density and concentrations of the elderly, very young, and the poor. Special attention should be given to those open-space deficient areas rating low in both "visual interest of street facade" and "block variation." These are areas where the visual enrichment by landscaped open spaces would be of particular value.

QUALITY OF ENVIRONMENT SURVEY DEFICIENT AREAS



The Summary Evaluation sets forth a single, clear picture of the relative need of areas of the City for environmental improvement. As such it provides an additional perspective for reviewing policies and priorities. The shaded areas on the map indicate those parts of the City having the fewest positive physical attributes and, therefore, are least likely to maintain or upgrade themselves without assistance. Public investments may be required to provide or compensate for the lacking physical amenities. Transportation improvements and renewed private investment can, in themselves, contribute positive attributes to an area. They can also modify the need for other public inputs aimed at improving the environment.

The Summary Evaluation map was prepared by adding the positive and negative ratings for eight of the nine environmental factors balancing the positive against the negative ratings. Climate was omitted since , in terms of either existing development pattern or public attitude, it does not appear to be a significant determinant. The Summary Evaluation resulted from a process of pairing the eight maps and then preparing a composite map for each pair. The composites in turn were combined agai to produce this Summary Evaluation. In the process of combining them, individual scores were added together in a way that would shift average conditions toward the extremes of high or low.

> For example, an average rating (0) for "quality of view" when combined with a poor rating (-1) for "distance to open space" would be shown as poor (-1) on the composite map. The result is that except where scores balance out directly on the center line of average (0) they become either "above average" or "below average."

The solid areas on the map -- indicating "low or bad condition" -- should be considered first for public improvements. The shaded areas - indicating "below average or poor" -- should be considered second excep within and around "low or bad" areas where they may merit first consideration as well.

QUALITY OF ENVIRONMENT SURVEY: SUMMARY EVALUATION

SUMMARY

This survey has attempted to indicate the relative quality of some aspects of the City's physical environment. It is not a statement of the total environmental quality of San Francisco. But it draws in broad strokes the kinds of physical problems or deficiencies which exist. And it shows in equally broad strokes the many physical amenities with which San Francisco is endowed. The background of environmental assets and debits illuminates the findings of the more detailed and specific pattern and image surveys comprising other sections of this report.

The overall pattern which emerges here indicates that approximately two-thirds of the entire City has an average or better environment. Deficiencies tend to aggregate. An area rated poor in maintenance, for example, will usually rate poorly in regard to one or more other factors. Below average ratings also tend to be concentrated in bands or clusters most of which occur along the Mission Street Corridor. The more intensively and extensively deficient areas along the Mission Corridor lie south of Market extending southward to Army Street between Mission Street and the James Lick Freeway. Of the clusters that occur outside of this corridor only two of significance are north of Market Street: Hayes Valley (just east of Alamo Square) and immediately northeast of the Civic

Center. In the south and east there are similar concentrations about Hunters Point, Visitacion Valley and between Mission and Alemany just north of the County line.

The picture of environmental quality presented by the factors correlates closely with the stated environmental values and concerns of San Franciscans. In this light the patterns, particularly those of presence of nature and quality of maintenance, reflect residents' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their neighborhood. The one-third of the City registering below average in this evaluation is characterized by areas of high population density, underscoring the environmental problems where this occurs. Improvement of the environment in these areas should be a major City goal in the years ahead.

APPENDIX TO QUALITY OF ENVIRONMENT SURVEY

NOTES ON METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the survey was to evaluate the relative quality of the physical environment throughout the city. The nine environmental factors and the scoring system were developed to achieve the consistency and objectivity desired. The following is an outline of the decisions used in arriving at the scale and procedures of the survey.

Unit of City-wide evaluation: The city block was determined to be the easiest element for mapping and working with any scoring system. The block was defined as being the street environment from one intersection to the next. As such, the street environment included assessment of the quality and uses occurring in or near it. Each evaluation was made from the center or near the center of each block; in this fashion, each city block was evaluated on all four of its sides. The more complex blocks were evaluated on foot; those less complex areas were surveyed by automobile. Certain areas of the city such as parks, military installations, railroad switch yards, and other large-scale industrial uses were omitted from the survey. The exceptional nature of these areas did not lend themselves to the survey methodology. Ultimately, 1500 of the city's blocks were evaluated using the scoring system and environmental factors described next in this section.

The Rating System. Each environmental factor was rated according to a five-point scale. This decision was made because it provides an adequate range of values considering the scope of the survey, a larger scale, such as a seven-point scale, was not selected because it provided too many distinctions for the general nature of the survey.

The Environmental Factors: These factors were selected for the reasons cited earlier in this report: they were relevant to the needs of the public as well as to the urban designers, and they were applicable to all parts of the city. In addition, there were secondary reasons for particular factors being selected. One of these is the requirement that the factor be distinguishable from others within its block. Another is that the factor be given a comparative score, not an absolute one. Accordingly, environmental elements such as overhead wiring were rejected as being a "factor" but might be included in an assessment of the Environmental "factor", "Quality of View". Of the nine factors selected, two were determined by reasearch within the offices of the Department of City Planning. Of the remaining seven, six were evaluated in the field and one in the Department but based upon field observations.

The following is a list of the nine factors and the source of information.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTOR	SOURCE OF INFORMATION
Quality of Maintenance	
Quality of View	Block-by-block Field Survey
Visual Interest of Street Facade	
Block Variation	
Presence of Nature	
Compatibility of Traffic	
Clarity of Local Image	Prepared after completion of the field survey based upon general observations and impressions obtained in the field
Distance to Open Space	Based on in-office research
Micro-climate	

Distance to open space was determined by locating all public parks and open space on a city map and measuring walking distances from them. Micro-climate was more elusive. No detailed micro-climate studies have been made of San Francisco. Leading meteorologists who had observed San Francisco weather patterns were contacted and from their commentary and available studies the micro-climate map presented in Preliminary Report #1 was prepared.

The method employed within the field: The 1500 blocks of the survey were divided into 65 areas; each area overlapped adjacent ones by one-block strips. The field survey team then

took alternating areas and rated the blocks within them using the five-point scoring system. In order to maintain a degree of uniformity of analysis, the research team members took different areas of the city on subsequent days. In addition, a number of the first areas surveyed using this technique were re-surveyed at the conclusion of the evaluation to compensate for what might have been evaluations based on insufficient knowledge of the quality of the rest of the city. By dividing the 1500 blocks into 65 overlapping areas, an additional check on the accuracy of individual scores was given. Each field research team's scores were compared at these overlapping boundaries and discrepancies were noted and subsequently resolved. This procedure provided a quick check on the uniformity of judgment of the field survey team members.

Correlation of the Quality of Environment Evaluations: A Social Reconnaissance Survey conducted in the fall of 1969 provides a basis for comparing the staff evaluations with residents' ratings for the same blocks. In this survey, respondents were asked to rate 25 physical characteristics of their block according to a scale of good, fair, or poor. These characteristics and their scores were then converted to a form which allowed them to be compared to the results of the Quality of Environment Survey.

A comparison of the rank order of the two sets of scores shows a high correlation. In the 13 block sample, only three blocks showed a significant divergence between the rank order of the two surveys' total scores. All three divergent blocks were from areas identified as Mixed Owner and Renter Occupancy. Interestingly, the respondents of the three blocks were characterized by higher-than-average educational levels than in the remaining 10 blocks. The implication is that higher educational levels are related to a more critical attitude.

Of the individual environmental factors, Presence of Nature, followed by Quality of View, Quality of Maintenance, and Distance to Open Space had the closest correlation to the Social Reconnaissance Survey scores.

In reviewing the results of these two surveys, it should be remembered that the Urban Design field survey team evaluated each block in relation to the range of conditions found in the entire City. But in the Social Reconnaissance Survey, the basis of comparison used by respondents is not known. They may have been comparing their block to one they grew up on, and this block could well have been in another city. This difference could account for a considerable divergence of value. Additionally, the correlation is also remarkable since the perception of what constitutes a satisfactory degree of a given quality may vary among different population groups.

Given these considerations and the 77 percent correlation of rank order of scores, the Quality of Environment evaluation can be said to provide a reasonable picture of relative environmental quality.

INTERNAL PATTERN AND IMAGE SURVEY

BACKGROUND: San Francisco contains a multitude of different places neighborhoods and districts, each differing in size, character and individuality. Some are highly distinctive; others are not very different from surrounding areas. They often achieve their identity by strong boundaries or through vital centers of activity. Many physical elements such as unique buildings, commercial areas, landscaping, age and general architectural character also contribute to the visual order and pattern of the City and describe their neighborhood. Identifiable areas, neighborhoods and districts give the City a human-scaled frame of reference important to a personal sense of place and identification with an area. Knowledge of these features and activities is essential to the preparation of City-wide, District and Sub-Neighborhood plans.

PURPOSE: This survey entailed the identification, evaluation and charting of those physical features that contribute to understanding the structure and organization of the City. Emphasis was upon elements such as focal points, viewpoints, landmarks, terrain and movement patterns which create order and "place" at the local scale. The information collected will be used in a variety of ways. Identification of important viewpoints and street views, for example, provides a basis for implementing protective controls. Design problems and opportunities observed in each district may suggest special projects or become the focus of district-scale designs studies. The data as a whole may be applied toward preparation of

urban design plans and policies, "design terms of reference" to guide private development or the review of Capital Improvement Program items.

SURVEY APPROACH: The 15 planning areas adopted by the Department of City Planning set the framework for the survey. These areas were surveyed consecutively by a two-man team of urban designers. The frame of reference was essentially that of a pedestrian viewpoint. Those elements were identified and recorded which were significant at the local neighborhood level. Views, for example, were of concern only as a local attribute; the subject of the view became important only as it affected the view's quality. The team examined each planning area not only for specific elements such as focal points and landmarks but also for more general features, including the distinction of its sub-areas or enclaves, the clarity of boundaries, and those activities and movement which gave definition to the planning area or sub-areas.

ORGANIZATION OF DATA: A written and graphic record was prepared for each of the 15 planning areas. In this report, because of space limitations, only five areas are presented. The other areas were combined and are presented as City-wide maps. For each planning area, four graphic diagrams describing a different aspect of the physical environment were prepared. When combined these form the four City-wide maps as well. They are:

1. Focal Points, Landmarks and Views: outstanding buildings and natural features; streets offering good or superior views; and the location of particularly fine viewpoints and the direction of the more important views.

2. Activity-Movement Patterns: areas of intensive pedestrian activity; streets with heavy/fast traffic, and focal points for public activity such as schools, libraries, and police stations.

3. Physical Form Elements: those strong form elements, natural and man-made, marked by sharp breaks in the pattern and character of development;

4. Problems and Opportunities: Related to the physical features and patterns listed under the above three categories, urban design problems and opportunities were noted for further consideration as possible components of future urban design proposals.

In addition to these four elements, the graphic plates for individual planning areas also include selected factors from the Quality of Environment Survey. These provide a quick comparison

with the Internal Pattern and Image data. Those sections of each planning area scoring "below average" or "bad" are shown in black for the following four environmental factors:

1. Distance to Open Space
2. Presence of Nature
3. Quality of Maintenance
4. Summary Evaluation

The City-wide maps do not include survey data for three planning areas: Downtown, South Bayshore, and Bernal Heights. These areas have been the subject of similar, recent planning and design studies. They are summarized in Preliminary Report #2.

The four City-wide maps presented on the following pages are preceded by a brief commentary on the map and definitions of some of the terms used on the maps. These definitions also apply to the separate planning area maps.

CITY-WIDE MAP: FOCAL POINTS, LANDMARKS AND VIEWS

This map presents a City-wide summary of three important and related visual elements: focal points, landmarks and views.

MAJOR FOCAL POINTS are clearly discernible features - either natural or man-made - that are distinctive by virtue of their size and height. They are important as points of orientation and identity (e.g., Golden Gate Bridge, Bank of America).

MINOR FOCAL POINTS serve the same function but are seen and known within only a limited part of the City (e.g., French Hospital, Pagoda of the Japanese Cultural Center).

LANDMARKS serve a similar purpose within their immediate setting. They are notable more for their unique architectural qualities than for their size or visibility (e.g., Octagon House, Cable Car Barn).

STREETS WITH GOOD VIEWS indicate streets which were rated as "good" or "excellent" in the Quality of Environment Survey. Such "good" street views are well-balanced and pleasing to the observer (e.g., the views from a portion of Lombard, Mansell, Lakeview Avenue).

Major and minor focal points are distributed fairly evenly throughout the City. Only the Outer Sunset and South of Market areas lack an appropriate portion. While the South of Market's views largely compensate for its lack of focal points, the Sunset is not so fortunate.

While the distribution of focal points is fairly even, their quality - as measured by visual richness and importances - is not. Focal points in the southern and western portions of the City generally are less significant and less interesting.

Landmarks, as might be expected, are found most frequently in the older and more diverse sections of the City. The northeast corner of the City is most richly endowed. South of Market, Outer Sunset and Richmond have notably few landmarks in comparison to their size. The lack of identifying features contributes to their visual monotony and sameness. In such areas, public building should be given strong, interesting forms or at least painted with a richer palate than usual. Special design controls applied to selected locations might also be used to introduce variety and identifying features into dull areas of the City. Other possible substitutions for landmarks include special landscaping, street closures, and changes in sidewalk width.

Streets with good views are found in every planning area in the City. Such views are basic to San Francisco's image and character. They can be lost or damaged. The street view between Alamo Square and Golden Gate Park and a similar one between Alta Plaza and Presidio Terrace, for example, will both be blocked or impinged upon by hospital expansions in the near future. They are not replacable, and it is almost impossible to create new ones. The protection of good street views should be an important objective of any urban design plan.

PLANNING AREA BOUNDARY

MAJOR TOPOGRAPHIC FORM

MAJOR GREEN, OPEN SPACE

MAJOR FOCAL POINT

MINOR FOCAL POINT

LANDMARK

STREETS WITH GOOD VIEWS

FOCAL POINTS LANDMARKS VIEWS

CITY-WIDE MAP: ACTIVITY-MOVEMENT PATTERNS

This map presents a picture of City-wide patterns of commercial activity, community facilities and traffic movement. The movement of cars and people is as much an identifying feature of streets and areas of the City as the buildings and other more permanent elements that compose them. Commercial activity and community facilities are generators of both automobile and pedestrian activity.

CITY-WIDE COMMERCIAL refers to those streets or facilities which attract shoppers from throughout and beyond the City (e.g., Union Street, Van Ness "Auto Row"). Such shopping areas are usually characterized by a distinctive image and individuality.

LOCAL COMMERCIAL streets or centers serve their immediate neighborhood or community. They are usually relatively low key in nature and less distinctive.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES are the schools, libraries, police and fire stations and health clinics serving the public.

MAJOR MOVEMENT indicates the most heavily used streets and freeways in the City. Moving traffic is the dominant activity (19th Avenue, James Lick Freeway). Such facilities generally handle in excess of 10,000 cars per 24-hour period.

MINOR MOVEMENT refers to streets that are set apart from adjacent streets by higher volumes of traffic, usually in excess of 5,000 cars per 24-hour period (Fillmore Street, Mission Street).

Traffic tends to make a street an edge to an area. If heavy enough, it can become a very real barrier, inhibiting casual pedestrian movement and social contacts across the street. Local commercial uses along a street have the opposite effect, bringing people together from neighborhoods on both sides. City-wide commercial activity may do the opposite if intensive enough. Where City-wide commercial and major traffic movement combine, such as "Auto Row" on Van Ness Avenue, the motel strip along Lombard or much of Geary, that street becomes an even more formidable divider. Local commercial uses can - if vital enough - cancel out the divisive effect of heavy traffic as they do at moany points along Mission Street, Ocean Avenue and at some places along Geary.

Local shopping streets closely parallel major movement streets throughout the City. Examples include Lombard-Chestnut, Van Ness-Polk, Geary-Clement, Portola-West Portal, Bayshore-San Bruno and Alemany-Lower Mission.

Commercial uses and traffic movement on streets together and separately create strong visual patterns throughout the City. They combine in different ways to make streets work as either edges or as barriers between areas or as seams joining neighborhoods.

When streets with major traffic movements are closely spaced as in the Mission and Western Addition, they lose significance as defining elements. Such areas are properly thought of as fragmented, particularly where the major streets carry large volumes of through traffic. Residents perceive streets such as Franklin, Bush, Pine, Oak and Fell as slicing through their neighborhoods and as belonging to the cars that dominate them. Western Addition and Mission are characterized by heavy traffic rather than defined by trafficways.

In the Outer Sunset and a large portion of Ingleside where terrain does little to define a neighborhood structure, closer spacing of more heavily used trafficways might be desirable. This could be achieved by closing parts of some streets so as to focus traffic onto selected corridors. These corridors would then be underscored by special design treatment.

The relation of community facilities to commercial areas and more heavily used streets is readily seen on the map. The southwest quadrant stands out for the separation of these facilities. Not all community facilities need be or should be adjacent to major trafficways orcommercial areas. Those that do, such as libraries and clinics, could contribute to the vitality of commercial areas or, by their high visibility on a major thoroughfare, better serve the community.


GOLDEN GATE
SAN FRANCISCO BAY
GOLDEN GATE PARK
NOT IN SURVEY
NOT IN SURVEY
NOT IN SURVEY
N
CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
SAN MATEO COUNTY
PLANNING AREA BOUNDARY
MAJOR TOPOGRAPHIC FORM
MAJOR GREEN, OPEN SPACE
LOCAL COMMERCIAL
CITYWIDE COMMERCIAL
COMMUNITY FACILITY
FREEWAY
MAJOR MOVEMENT
MINOR MOVEMENT
ACTIVITY MOVEMENT PATTERNS

CITY-WIDE MAP: PHYSICAL FORM ELEMENTS

Form elements are those objects in the urban landscape that create significant walls, lines, boundaries, edges and otherwise limit visual continuity. This map focuses on such man-made elements as arranged on the natural forms of the City. The terms used need some explanation to give a better idea of this map's implication.

A STRONG BUILDING EDGE refers to a "wall" effect created by the front of a building or several adjacent buildings (Marina Boulevard, Montgomery Street). Other kinds of edges are created by wide, busy streets or elevated freeways.

HIGH BUILDINGS are buildings whose height makes them stand out from other surrounding structures (Hall of Justice, Bank of America).

AREA DISTINCT IN ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER refers to areas identified by a similar architectural style setting them apart from surrounding development (Marina, Sea Cliff).

SIGNIFICANT BUILDINGS are those considered to be of architectural and/or historic value. With few exceptions, they are not significant form elements and are included here only to avoid confusion with landmarks.

Continuous street facades enclosing a precisely defined street "space" are an important attribute of San Francisco. This qualit is being eroded at a rapid rate by both public and private actions. Parking lots at corners or mid-block, buildings facing inward away from the street, set-backs, open parking below buildings and combinations thereof are destroying the traditional streetscape.

The automobile is a principal force pushing at the "walls" of the street. The current emphasis among architects to be "different" and the spread of garish commercial francise operations are not too different in their effect. Together they are formidable. The northeast quadrant of the City - including the Mission and Western Addition - are most sensitive in this regard. Here are clustered many significant buildings and vulnerable "Old San Francisco" street scenes.

The northeast quadrant is also the most complex part of the City, with many sub-areas of distinctive architecture, numerous high buildings and a network of strong building edges. To the southwest, man-made physical form elements are more sparsely distributed. Here are large areas with few such features. Those

building edges and high buildings that exist are isolated and lack a coherent pattern or framework. The design problem in these areas is to tie the separate pieces together in a coherent order.

The areas of distinctive architectural character are important building blocks for delineating the parts of the City. These patterns should be respected and reinforced. They have a strong identity and in many instances a self-awareness.

Preservation-oriented measures should be considered where clusters of significant buildings are indicated. New construction near significant buildings should respect their integrity and their need for an appropriate setting.

PLANNING AREA BOUNDARY

MAJOR TOPOGRAPHIC FORM
MAJOR GREEN, OPEN SPACE

STRONG BUILDING EDGE
HIGH BUILDINGS
AREA DISTINCT IN ARCH. CHARACTER
SIGNIFICANT BUILDINGS: ARCH./HIST. *

PHYSICAL FORM ELEMENTS

INTERPRETATION: PROBLEMS OPPORTUNITIES

CITYWIDE MAP: PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Many urban design problems and opportunities were noted throughout the City during the field studies for the Internal Pattern and Image Survey. Their locations and general extents are shown on this map. Descriptions of each problem and opportunity indicated on the map are listed by planning area in the following text.

It should be pointed out that this list is not all-inclusive. Only the more significant and obvious problems and opportunities are presented. They are all possibilities for future public and private action and should be considered in the preparation of urban design plans for their respective areas.

PROBLEMS

A. Visual monotony resulting from a repetitive street grid, similar building style and height, and ever-present overhead wires characterize much of this area. Few of the new residential buildings contribute in a positive sense to the area's environmental character. Their plain facades tend to intensify rather than alleviate the visual monotony.

B. There are many small separate shopping areas with little or no visual significance or contrast with surrounding residential uses. Their lack of variety and identity contributes to a visual sameness.

C. Street width, except for Park Presidio, Geary, California, Arguello, and Lake, is not an indication of its use or importance. Most streets are unnecessarily wide. Of the exceptions, only Lake appears to be overused, and its 25-mile-per-hour speed limit goes unobserved. Over-wide streets lined with overhead wires silhouetted against the sky is one of Richmond's most common design problems.

D. East/west streets intersecting Arguello do not line up, and motorists must negotiate a potentially dangerous jog.

OPPORTUNITIES

1. The wide, underused streets offer unique opportunities for overcoming Richmond's monotonous character. Landscaped center strips such as on 40th Avenue, between Balboa and Fulton; widened sidewalk areas and partial street closures to create mini-parks; and special landscaping would do much to introduce variety.

2. Washington Heights school site could be emphasized with higher forms, such as a high-rise educational complex or a mixture of community facilities and residences. Simply adding tall trees would accentuate the heights with new color and texture. Similarly, higher residential buildings on selective sites around Lincoln Park would enhance the rise of the natural terrain.

3. The scattered blocks with architecturally or historically significant houses offer a potential for special treatment. Such differences as exist could be emphasized by coordinating building colors and public and private landscaping. (To the same end,

community facilities such as schools could be used to introduce variety and color to neighborhoods).

4. The Muni Building and car yards are grouped in a location where new development would be desirable. High forms here could emphasize this natural hill as a gateway into Richmond. Recent proposals for the reservoir and the Muni's interest in multiple-use facilities suggest this opportunity is not far from being realized.

5. Along the ocean, extending north around Cliff House to the Golden Gate, is a great deal of poorly used land. Much of this land could be turned into new kinds of recreation spaces, perhaps combining some commercial uses as well. The imaginative redevelopment of Playland could revitalize that portion of the Waterfront.

6. The visual strength of commercial areas in Richmond can be enhanced in many ways. Special signing, store front treatment and landscaping would be a start. A more long-range improvement would involve the consolidation of stores where they are unnecessarily strung out. One simple measure would be to simply allow diagonal parking where street width is excessive.

7. The World War II gun emplacements in Fort Miley could be developed as a unique recreational area or as an adjunct of the Palace of the Legion of Honor Museum, such as a sculpture garden.

PROBLEMS

A. Traffic between the Golden Gate Bridge and Downtown is a major problem on many streets in the Marina. Design solutions are needed to minimize or eliminate the negative effect of this traffic on residential and public recreation areas.

B. Access to the Palace of Fine Arts is difficult. Marin commuters get the best view, and that is of its backside. Even then the route to it is not clear. As the Palace is developed for more intensive use, parking will also be a problem.

C. Parking is a problem in the Marina's commercial and recreational areas. Union Street attracts a large number of shoppers from throughout the City who drive. Finding parking here is usually difficult.

D. Marina Green is popular with people from throughout the City. However, when they get there, the pleasant natural qualities of the park are too often dominated by automobiles.

OPPORTUNITIES

1. Further development of high-rise residential towers along Pacific Heights Ridge between Pacific and Jackson Streets - taking advantage of the magnificent views - might be considered. Extending the present 105' height limit westward to the Presidio would allow further definition of the ridge form without affecting existing views.

2. The waterfront of both the Presidio and Fort Mason should be developed and preserved for public use. The extensive green open spaces and fine vista points inland should be similarly treated. A long-range open space plan is needed to protect these irreplacable public resources. The protection of these assets is of City-wide and national concern.

3. Fort Mason presents a special opportunity because the City may be able to acquire part or all of the site through Federal Surplus Properties. A tunnel connection between Marina Boulevard and North Point Street could help solve the Golden Gate-Downtown traffic problem. The Fort could also be developed for a combination of uses, including upen recreation space and community facilities. An educational park and health facility have also been suggested for the site. In addition, the piers could

become part of a commercial recreation development which could be linked to Ghirardelli Square by a waterfront walkway.

4. Providing sufficient parking to Union Street - and similar situations - can help maintain the desirability of surrounding residential uses.

5. With center strip landscaping, tree planting, and coordinated signing and street facade design, Lombard Street could become an attractive auto-oriented boulevard improving its desirability as a tourist center.

6. Van Ness Avenue has a potential for more intensive development of office and residential buildings. Within an appropriate height envelope to protect views from Nob Hill, such development would help to create a strong building facade. Traffic problems may first have to be resolved.

PROBLEMS

A. The northward growth of the Central Business District threatens many of this area's unique assets. The famous hills, magnificent views from streets and homes, and the distinctive character of many neighborhoods are at stake. The increasing number of high-rise buildings north of Market Street, in the Portsmouth Corridor and adjacent areas, threatens the historic form and character of Jackson Square and Chinatown. The attractive, yet delicate design transition between residential forms on Telegraph Hill and the larger buildings of the financial district could also be destroyed with improperly placed high-rise buildings. Similarly, the distinction between the forms of Russian and Nob Hill can be easily lost through the construction of high structures in the saddle between the hills. Ironically, these assets are the qualities that most often attract developers. The design problem is how to accommodate growth and change while preserving the unique qualities of the area.

B. The concentration of tourist-oriented activities into the Northeast area threatens the very things that originally made it popular. The shortage of parking space fills the streets and even the sidewalks with cars. The resulting blight of automobiles renders even the most charming street commonplace. The displacement of "real" San Francisco with contrived commercializations is a more subtle loss that cannot be measured.

C. Traffic between Golden Gate Bridge and Downtown adversely affects both residential and commercial areas. A properly designed traffic corridor is needed. Part of the current solution - the Embarcadero Freeway - creates as many design problems as the traffic problems it solves. Its massive awkward form blocks views and cuts the waterfront off from people.

D. There is a shortage of open recreation space in the area's dense residential neighborhoods of Nob Hill and Chinatown. The problems of overcrowding, substandard housing and cramped community facilities intensify the open space problem here.

OPPORTUNITIES

1. The recent Northern Waterfront Plan provides a sound basis for redevelopment of the waterfront. The Plan includes design guidelines and innovative suggestions for mixing land uses to take advantage of the area's natural qualities.

2. Ghirardelli Square and the Cannery are two examples where history has provided the guidelines for good urban design. The lessons demonstrated here can be applied in many areas such as Chinatown, along the waterfront, Jackson Square, and the three main hills.

3. Many opportunities are in detailed improvements and preservation-oriented measures. Columbus Avenue, for example, could be improved to become a stronger unifying design element. Streets too steep for automobiles, such as Kearny north of Broadway, could be landscaped and terraced. Land in the public right-of-way over the Broadway and Stockton tunnels offers potential for new open spaces.

4. The reservoir on Bay Street, the Muni bus storage yard, and the railyards in the Northern Waterfront offer three opportunities for achieving multiple city goals. New housing, open spaces, and community facilities can be provided through the imaginative redevelopment of these lands.

PROBLEMS

A. Vacant buildings, deteriorating and covered with campaign posters; littered streets and vacant lots; and the network of overhead utility wires are major problems in many sections of Western Addition.

B. The Western Addition presently has a comfortable feeling of enclosure and unity created by the slope of land and sympathetic development. High, bulky buildings scattered indiscriminantly throughout the area could destroy this quality.

C. Rich, strong street facades are part of the Western Addition's identity. Recent residential development, public and private, introduces new spatial arrangements of housing units and parking that ignore the traditional orientation toward the street. The result is often that neither the block interior or the street frontage are controlled and maintained by residents.

D. One of the City's major east-west traffic corridors runs through the primarily residential area. The detrimental effect of large traffic volumes on the area's residential qualities poses a serious design problem. Geary Boulevard divides the area into north and south sections. Fulton, Golden Gate, Turk, Bush/Pine and Oak/Fell further sub-divide it. East and west, the Western Addition is chopped up by Divisadero, part of Webster, and Franklin/Gough. If more high volume one-way couplets are added, the residential attractiveness will correspondingly diminish.

E. Low maintenance, overhead wires and deteriorating buildings characterize most of the commercial areas. These qualities are particularly evident along Fillmore and McAllister.

F. The dispersion of stores and services along Divisadero, coupled with congested traffic, make shopping difficult.

OPPORTUNITIES

1. The many architecturally and historically significant residences in Western Addition have a good potential for rehabilitation and could provide a necessary link between the old and new residential character. If maintained and restored, these residences could become a strong identifying feature of the area.

2. The declining quality of homes lining the Panhandle and the increasing need for family housing provide opportunities for future development of new, medium-rise housing designed for families. Those units that could be restored would provide a desirable link to the past.

3. The Japanese Cultural Center is growing in importance as a City-wide commercial area. Residents and tourists are attracted by the restaurants, trade shops and specialty stores. The adjacent Nihon Machi Redevelopment Project will further enhance the area.

4. Fillmore Street is currently an active center of the black community. Redevelopment programs in this area promise improvements which will revitalize the street as a community shopping area.

5. Six hospitals and two health centers are situated in the Western Addition. Such institutions usually expand into nearby blocks and thus have a responsibility to coordinate their development with the City. Properly conceived, their expansion could provide needed amenities and enhance the area.

PROBLEMS

A. Areas in Buena Vista, especially east of Divisadero and south of the Oak/Fell corridor, have a depressing, low environmental quality. Residences are deteriorating, maintenance is poor, there are few street amenities such as trees, and overhead is a maze of wires.

B. In the northeastern corner of Buena Vista there is an incompatible mixture of housing, commercial and light industrial uses.

C. On Haight and Divisadero there are numerous vacant stores with boarded up fronts, others are occupied but dilapidated.

D. There are few pedestrian amenities on Upper Market to buffer the commercial areas from the heavy traffic and create a pleasant shopping environment.

E. Buena Vista Park is not fully used because it lacks recreational facilities. There is little reason for people to go there; moreover, they feel it is dangerous. Also, views from the park, which could be spectacular, are blocked by overgrown trees.

F. Corona Heights contains a playground and museum, yet access to those facilities is difficult for most residents. The physical form of Corona Heights, a bare, eroding rock mound, is not a great visual asset to the area.

G. Even Golden Gate Park, as it adjoins Buena Vista at Stanyan and Lincoln Way, does not contribute to the appearance and quality of the area. It has been called the "ugliest part of the park," and Kezar Stadium, the Field House, a police station and the emergency hospital support this appraisal.

H. The six-way intersection of Market, Castro, and Seventeenth Street is a point of traffic congestion because movement patterns are not well defined. Problems created for pedestrians may well be greater than those for vehicles.

I. Streetcars and the tunnel portals at Duboce and Carl Streets present a potentially dangerous situation for pedestrians, especially for Duboce Park users.

OPPORTUNITIES

1. The preservation and rehabilitation of the area's many historic and architecturally significant structures is the key to upgrading this planning area. Some have already been improved privately. With public assistance private rehabilitation can be accelerated. Undergrounding of utilities and planting street trees would help.

2. Building heights could be increased in the vicinity of the Central Freeway and Market Street. Higher forms in this location would provide a visual focus to the area at a scale appropriate to the freeway structure.

3. The 16.6 acre Corona Heights Playground is currently under-used because of extreme topography. It offers an opportunity for multi-use purposes: a playground that serves many children many ways, a mixture of residences and recreation, or even heavily planted with flowering shrubs as a City-wide focal point.

4. The southeast corner of Golden Gate Park could be a visual asset to Buena Vista. Design-conscious public improvements in and around Kezar could trigger adjacent private investments.

5. Buena Vista Park, Gratten Playground, and Duboce Park could be improved to serve the area better.

6. Improvements such as bus waiting plazas, greenway connections into the residential areas, or coordinated lighting and building facade design could greatly enhance the Haight Street shopping area.

7. Confining north-south traffic between Clayton and Masonic to a single route would minimize the negative effect on the residential area.

PROBLEMS

A. Minimal landscaping, overhead utility wires and the bland color of buildings add up to a visually uninteresting residential area surrounding S. Paul's Church. Public buildings are often the worst offenders. The recreation center in this neighborhood is surrounded with a ten-foot high chain link fence. Holes in this fence are indications that the center is well used despite padlocked gates.

B. Commercial uses along Church Street are spread out and mingled with residences. Maintenance and physical quality of the shops reflects somewhat marginal operations. These deficiencies coupled with streetcar tracks, overhead wires and sparse landscaping make the street a drab place for shopping.

C. George Christopher Playground is undeveloped and cannot be distinguished from vacant land on the Heights. Glen Canyon could contribute more in the way of recreation facilities to surrounding neighborhoods.

OPPORTUNITIES

1. There are many small vacant sites throughout the area that could be used for new residences or parks. Three acres at the eastern termination of Belgrave Avenue could support an imaginative residential development with excellent views of the city. Vacant land at Yukon and Nineteenth Avenue and at the intersection of Duncan and Castro are similiar opportunities.

2. There are opportunities for restoring clusters of architecturally or historically interesting houses in the middle and southern parts of the area.

3. Landscaping San Jose Avenue's median strip would greatly enhance this bleak stretch of roadway.

4. Church Street shopping could be made more attractive by colorful landscaping and widening sidewalks near streetcar stops to create small waiting plazas.

PROBLEMS

A. Residences in many places in the Mission are adjacent to noxious industrial uses. Residents suffer when noise, fumes and congestion of industrial or large commercial enterprises are not adequately buffered. The lack of off-street loading zones compound the problem, multiplying the hazards to residents.

B. Dolores, Guerrero, Valencia, Mission, South Van Ness, and Potrero all carry heavy through traffic. The long blocks make many streets appear to be "go streets" regardless of their volume and adjacent uses. Needless to say, fast and/or heavy traffic is not compatible with residential uses.

C. Movement between south of Market and the Mission is made difficult for the motorist by the complicated street grid and the lack of direction-giving focal points. The motorist is channeled between high buildings lining the streets until he is beneath the Central Skyway. He must then negotiate the turn in a forest of steel supports. Service and delivery trucks are often double-parked in this area, and the noise from the freeway is also disturbing.

D. The Mission lacks open spaces for recreation near its high-density residential centers. Open green spaces are few, street trees minimal and automobiles usually crowd the sidewalks. Open spaces that do exist are often poorly situated. Franklin Square, for instance, is not in a residential area. It loses significance as visual and recreational open space because it is elevated and surrounded by a low concrete wall.

E. The Mission and 24th Street commercial strips lack focal points of activity. The future BART stations on Mission should help to correct this problem.

F. Valencia and South Van Ness commercial uses as presently constituted detract from surrounding residences.

OPPORTUNITIES

1. Restoring and maintaining the architecturally significant buildings found throughout the Mission can establish a positive image. A number of older homes, churches, and even industrial warehouses have already been restored. The Far West Laboratory's recent restoration of the Woolworth warehouse and the rehabilitated school on Potrero Avenue are good examples.

2. Vacant lots and underused industrial buildings in the Mission are possible sites for small-scale residential development. The old Regal Pale Brewery site is currently being considered for three hundred residential units. Another exciting possibility exists for multi-use development over the Muni yards on Mariposa Street. In the area immediately surrounding Franklin Square new housing units might be provided, taking advantage of the existing open space and rehabilitatable buildings.

3. The small, almost intimate qualities of the Mission's alleys offer opportunities for restoring many small but significant areas. Residences on the alleys could be renewed as a unit including landscaping and coordinated street front improvements. Traffic could be restricted and small play areas developed for children within each reach of their homes.

4. School sites are a means for filling some of the open space needs in densely populated Mission. The Fire Department's Training Center is another public facility that might provide some open space and landscaping on its property.

5. Community facilities could be visually tied together with greenways along local streets. These greenways could help make the existing open spaces and other community facilities visually more important and pleasing parts of the Mission's environment. A good example along 19th Street is for connecting Mission Playground and Swimming Pool to Mission Park.

6. Air-rights use beneath the Central Skyway offers an opportunity for making the Division Street area into a good, light-industrial center rather than a point of confusion.

7. Consolidation of industrial uses in the northeastern portion of the Mission, east of the Mission Corridor and north of 20th Street would open an opportunity for locating uses in the Mission that could be advantageously linked to BART - especially commercial and higher-density residential uses. Such consolidation would permit the creation of a needed transition zone between residential and industrial uses.

OPPORTUNITIES - CONT'D.

8. BART stations at 24th and 16th Streets are major opportunities for concentrating commercial development along Mission Street. The commercial strip on 24th Street will also benefit and is an opportunity for developing a focus for local ethnic, cultural activities.

9. Traffic can be channeled onto the wider streets better suited to the automobile. Narrower streets then can be closed in places for developing small parks. One-way streets are desirable if accompanied by buffer strips of wide sidewalks and landscaping between residential uses and traffic.

PROBLEMS

A. Traffic through this area approaches the highest total volumes in the city and increases are promised from new freeways. Congestion is intensified by the inadequate supply of off-street loading berths and its consequences: double parked trucks, overloaded curb and sidewalk space, and constricted roadways. The incompatible mixture of rush-hour commuter traffic and trucks is another dimension of the problem.

B. Extensive areas appear underused. South of China Basin, for example, there are large expanses of poorly used land which results in visual confusion and inefficiency. Seemingly unused railroad tracks take up acres.

C. With the exception of Potrero Hill, the planning area is characterized by poor housing stock. The houses are overcrowded and often sandwiched between incompatible industrial uses.

D. There is an extreme shortage of usable open space. In many residential areas, children are forced to play in the streets. Some of the existing parks, such as Jackson Playground, do not serve the neighborhoods in need.

E. Similarly, the schools South of Market are crowded and often in temporary structures that have been temporary too long. School grounds are poorly maintained and, because they are not well designed and pleasing, do little to meet the need for park space.

F. Zoning along the waterfront and for extensive areas inboard allow 100% coverage and impose no height limits. The potential thus exists for excluding even further public access to the waterfront and blocking of valued bay views.

OPPORTUNITIES

1. The large size of many blocks, wide streets, interior alleyways, and easy access to freeways are unique assets of this area. The potential exists for a radical restructuring for many areas south of Market. Yerba Buena Center is a beginning and a good example. Air-rights development over Southern Pacific Railyards, the China Basin Channel and the Bethlehem Shipyards are other, more long-term possibilities.

2. The wide streets on Potrero Hill could be used to better advantage for residents by widening sidewalks, planting street trees, and creating landscaped parking bays.

3. The redevelopment of Port Commission lands can have a significant impact on this planning area. Design guidelines set forth in the Northern Waterfront Plan and the South Bayshore Study begin to spell out how to achieve community objectives along the waterfront.

4. High form development on Potrero Hill near the Southern Embarcadero Freeway would accentuate the hill's visual importance and strengthen the area's citywide identity.

5. Twentieth Street near Potrero Hill Playground is unpaved and seldom used. Landscaped and provided with pedestrian paths it could be an asset to the area. Residential development is an alternative. Near the top of the hill, residences would have spectacular views and affect existing views to a minimum.

6. The 10.8 acre Wisconsin Street Temporary War Housing Site is to be returned to the city. The site presents a unique opportunity for the city to increase its housing stock. Approximately 200 moderate income units, designed to harmonize with the existing neighborhood, could be provided.

8. South Park is a charming small park in spite of its poor maintenance. Upgrading and providing additional recreation facilities could be an impetus for private improvements around the park's periphery. Numerous buildings in the immediate area such as the old San Francisco Warehouse, have been rehabilitated. Many other interesting buildings offer similar potential.

PROBLEMS

A. A lack of maintenance, landscaping, and variation in color makes up the overall impression of this planning area. Even the public buildings seem to detract from rather than add to it.

B. Urban design does not stop at county lines. The San Bruno Mountains to the south of this planning area visually affect the image of the area. Improper development could destroy one of this area's most scenic amenities.

C. John McLaren Park should be heavily used and should be a vital asset to the community. It is not. Access from many surrounding points is limited. The park offers little to attract residents to it.

D. Most children visiting Balboa Park must cross wide, heavily-used streets.

E. The commercial areas on Mission Street south of Geneva Avenue and on Geneva Avenue near the Cow Palace have similar design problems. Large asphalt parking lots, signs, and confusing separation between streets and adjacent uses add up to an unpleasant appearance.

F. Old Bayshore Boulevard is lined with industrial and local commercial uses in a confusing spatial order which is intensified by heavy traffic volumes.

G. The major east-west streets through the Excelsior community are Persia and Brazil. Although important routes, they are not visually distinguished as such.

H. At the intersection of Geneva, Ocean, and San Jose, directions are confusing and traffic is usually tied up. The run-down Muni car bar contributes visually to this problem.

I. The 12-block square concrete covered University Mound Reservoir is an eyesore as seen from above. From below, its marginal landscaping contributes little to the surrounding area.

OPPORTUNITIES

1. John McLaren Park could be linked more effectively to surrounding areas with improved circulation. Streets around the periphery could be extended into the park and greenways developed to reach outward to neighborhoods. Increasing the variety of activities provided in the park would make the park more attractive to residents and give South Central a more positive image.

2. Some locations in South Central are suitable for high-density residential development. One possible location is on the north side of McLaren Park where there are superb views of downtown.

3. The BART stations at Geneva Avenue and in Glen Park may stimulate new development. Early design and planning for the surrounding areas can help assure sound new development.

4. The large amount of publicly-owned land in the area holds potential for improving the area. The Muni yards; San Miguel, Denman and Balboa High Schools; Balboa Park; City College; and the Southern Freeway right-of-way are all public property. Air rights development over the Muni yards, exploiting the proximity to the BART station, is one example of what might be done. Such a project might involve a unique combination of residential and commercial uses or be developed as an adjunct of City College.

5. Gottingen Street, between Portola Junior High and Taylor Elementary School, could be closed off and developed as a community plaza. During school hours it could also provide additional recreation space.

6. Visitacion Valley Community Center could easily be connected with a pedestrian way to the shops on Leland Avenue. Using two vacant lots, a community gathering place could be developed here.

7. The reservoir in the Portola neighborhood of South Central stands out as an opportunity for doing something better than covering twelve blocks with concrete.

8. The Water Department also owns many small parcels of land throughout Visitacion Valley. As a series of mini-parks, they might also serve as links between residential areas and John McLaren Park.

PROBLEMS

A. Confusing, unordered spaces, and dead-end streets created in part by the Southern Freeway are the most notable problems along the southern boundary of the area. Low maintenance, overhead wires and great expanses of asphalt where roads merge into parking lots or front yards add to the problem.

B. Large vaguely defined intersections such as those at St. Francis Circle, Ocean and Geneva, and Junipero Serra and Nineteenth are uncomfortable and often confusing to traverse.

C. Holloway Avenue seems to be a major corridor for east-west traffic through Ingleside. Yet its appearance is that of a residential street.

D. San Francisco State College, Stonestown, and the expanse of Lake Merced are almost totally unconnected. It is impossible to get from one to another in a logical manner. The college is almost invisible from surrounding roads and is thus difficult to locate.

E. The commercial strip development on lower Ocean Avenue contains many local services and seems to generate a great deal of activity. Unfortunately, auto traffic creates an undesirable level of congestion and conflicts with streetcar movement. This congestion detracts from the shopping character of the street.

F. City College, located on Ocean Avenue, can often be missed from the street in spite of its larger forms. The adjacent Balboa reservoir, west of the college, is void of positive features. Together these two minor public facilities contribute little in a design sense to the immediate area.

OPPORTUNITIES

1. There are many parcels of land that are not built up and seem to be left over by the builders who developed the area. Examples can be seen around Mount Davidson and along the Southern Freeway corridor. The parcels offer an opportunity to develop greenways, mini-parks and open spaces within neighborhoods.

2. Normal growth and increased accessibility offered by BART will probably bring expansion of City College. The most likely direction for the campus to grow would be on to the Balboa reservoir site. This expansion could be the key for physically defining the end of Ocean Avenue and for ordering the now chaotic appearance. An alternative use of the reservoir would be an innovative combination of housing, recreation and commercial enterprises.

3. Pedestrian linkages should be developed between Stonestown and San Francisco State College. Similar connections could also be developed across Lake Merced Boulevard to Harding Park from the College. The bridge could take the form of a building over the roadway.

4. The Lakeshore/Lowell School sites, west of Stonestown, offer a unique opportunity for the future. This large amount of land, owned by the Unified School District, could be used for expansion of the present facilities into an educational park. Such a development could include community facilities as well. A second possibility is in trading the unused portions of the sites to acquire additional school sites in the City. Residential development of these portions would be compatible with the schools and would benefit from the proximity of Stonestown, Harding Park, and public transportation.

PROBLEMS

A. The residential area surrounding Polytechnic High School is notably lacking in amenities compared with the rest of the Sunset. A combination of heavy traffic and lack of street trees establishes a bleak character.

B. The commercial area between Lincoln and Judah on Ninth Avenue is dull and uninteresting. There is little landscaping, and many of the shops appear vacant.

C. The wide intersection of Woodside Avenue, O'Shaughnessy, and Portola Drive lacks spatial definitions and separates the open space qualities of Glen Canyon and Laguna Honda Valley.

OPPORTUNITIES

1. The existing open spaces in the area could constitute the beginning of an "open space system." Open green areas include Mt. Sutro, Twin Peaks, Laguna Honda Valley, and Sunset Heights. Most of these are in public ownership.

2. The area in the vicinity of Clarendon school/Mid-Town Terrace Playground might be further developed as a neighborhood center combining commercial, recreational and educational activities.

3. Kezar Stadium, Golden Gate Park, and Polytechnic High School present a situation where modest public inputs could result in significant improvement in the Inner Sunset. Greenway extensions from the Park through the Medical Center could link the Park with Mt. Sutro. With the same stroke, the high school would be greatly enhanced and recreational open space extended into the adjacent residential areas.

4. The Miraloma Shopping Center could be developed into a visually interesting neighborhood focus by creating a community plaza and by linking the New Diamond Heights High School, Youth Guidance Center, open space on Twin Peaks Boulevard and Glen Canyon.

5. Developing of O'Shaughnessy, Woodside Avenue and Laguna Honda into a parkway while retaining the open space character along its route is an opportunity to show that good design of an arterial does not have to adversely affect adjacent areas or its function.

6. The unoccupied radio station building on Twin Peaks could be redesigned to provide public viewing platforms and information about the panorama before them. Vacant land on Twin Peaks could be landscaped and developed for picnicking and hiking.

PROBLEMS

A. Monotonous repetition of identical building styles and block layout and the absence of visually strong centers of community activity characterize much of this planning area. Utility poles stand out in contrast to the average two-story height.

B. Pockets of low maintenance and deterioration occur in the Outer Sunset, especially along the Ocean.

C. Commercial areas are strung out for many blocks. As a result, they lack visual interest and the sense of activity that comes from the concentrated movement of people.

D. The large volume of traffice - some 50,000 vehicles a day - on 19th Avenue, a residential street, is a source of the most serious environmental problem in the Sunset. Parkway treatment similar to Sunset Boulevard or Park Presidio is needed here.

OPPORTUNITIES

1. Residential densities could be increased in parts of the Outer Sunset without destroying its existing qualities. The addition of new residential forms would not only provide additional housing units for San Francisco, but also would add to the identity and visual interest of the area. Opportunities for more intensive residential development exist along Lincoln Way near Golden Gate Park and near San Francisco's Zoological Gardens.

2. The eight square block concrete-covered Sunset Reservoir, sited on a low hill in the center of the Sunset, has exciting design possibilities for air-rights development.

3. Removing the utility poles and overhead wiring, adding street landscaping and using richer, more distinctive colors on public buildings could greatly improve the appearance of this area. Private homes that have been painted in rich colors introduce needed variety and identity to a block; the same effect could be achieved through a public effort.

4. Streets far exceed the size necessary for normal traffic volumes. In this regard, streets are opportunities. Widening sidewalk areas or closing some of them at intersections or at mid-block points could free land for developing neighborhood parks.

5. The small commercial areas can be greatly enhanced by special street landscaping, coordinated storefront remodeling and painting, and, where possible, consolidation into more compact vital centers.

6. In the future, 19th Avenue will probably have to be widened to accommodate increased demand and permit parkway treatment. In the process, opportunities may occur for creating additional park space, providing community facilities and new residential development along the right-of-way.

RICHMOND

Three Richmond area boundaries are either parks or the ocean; only its eastern boundary is formed by City streets. Located in the northwest corner of the City, this planning area has significant visual assets. These include the Presidio and Lincoln Park along the northern boundary, the ocean on the west and Golden Gate Park to the south. Only the eastern boundary is indistinct since it is formed by the maze of connecting streets as shown on the accompanying graphic plate.

There are visual assets within the Richmond as well. Hill forms provide excellent street views to the south, often over Golden Gate Park and across the Sunset District. Along the eastern boundary, Sutro Heights provides similar good views to the east, past San Francisco College for Women, to the high-rise buildings on Russian Hill. Elsewhere in the area, similar assets are less dramatic and less extensive as in the area between Sutro Heights and Washington Heights. The terrain varies less, and views frequently are confined or contained by the higher ridge of Presidio hills. Aside from such topographic assets, Richmond's residential character is marked by several hospitals, schools, and commercial buildings. Because the pattern of residential buildings is relatively uniform, these institutional forms provide needed visual focal points, thus maintaining a sense of variety without disturbing the overall visual unity of the area.

Residential Character

The district's overall residential development consists of single-family attached stucco homes, all similar in height, style and setback. However, there are several areas distinct, either through the quality of their architecture, their high degree of maintenance, or their landscaping. Of them, reference should be made to the single-family detached houses along the area's northern border and the two- to three-story apartments along the southern border.

Sea Cliff, Presidio Terrace and Sutro Heights are three areas that are distinct because of their residential character. Sea Cliff fronts directly on the Pacific Ocean and lies between the Presidio and Lincoln Park. It is a residential development of large, detached residences with wide setbacks and frequently elaborate landscaping. Sea Cliff is one of the very few residential developments in San Francisco which has direct visual proximity to the ocean. Such views and landscapes provide its residents with a high degree of open space and sense of nature. In contrast to this, Presidio Terrace is much smaller and more compact. Adjoining the Presidio near Arguello Street, it is a wall-enclosed group of large, stately homes which front on an oval-shaped drive. The last area, Sutro Heights, is in the northeast corner of the district and is distinguished by large homes, large trees, and northern views to the Golden Gate Bridge and San Francisco Bay.

Maintenance is generally quite high throughout the planning area, with the exception of the areas just north of San Francisco College for Women and next to Playland. The area lacks small local recreation open spaces, particularly in its interior along Geary. However, this is offset by the proximity to large open spaces to the north and south. Overhead wires are a problem and accentuate the level, unlandscaped portions of the planning area.

Commercial Character

There are some notable forms of commercial development in the Richmond area. The Playland recreation and entertainment area next to the Great Highway is one of them. The amusement park generates a carnival-like activity and includes questionable visual assets, such as food and beverage stands which remain boarded up throughout the winter months.

Another commercial development is a strip centered primarily along the length of Geary Boulevard, between Masonic and 28th Avenue. This two-mile stretch provides City-wide commercial services and is distinguished by diagonal parking, colorful commercial facades and a heavily landscaped center strip.

Clement Street contains local commercial services in the form of two strip developments, one between Arguello and 10th Avenue and the other between 17th and 28th Avenues. A concentration of facilities in the vicinity of 32nd Avenue marks the end of Clement Street commercial. This intersection is uniquely marked with Lincoln Park at one corner and bounded on the other corners by a gasoline station, one-story convenience commercial shops, and an asphalt-encircled supermarket.

Unique to the district is the commercial development located on Sacramento Avenue west of Presidio Avenue. A number of "art interest" and antique shops, with a high degree of maintenance, colorful signs and window displays, make this a distinctive place for street shopping.

Community Facilities

a) Parks

While some mention has been made of the extent and significance of the Presidio, Lincoln Park and Golden Gate Park, they exist as City-wide resources. As a neighborhood or area-wide resource, they provide primarily psychological open space. There are parks and playgrounds within the area, of which seven are small and visually insignificant. Each of these seven occupy the center one-third of their blocks and are scattered throughout the district. Many are concrete-surfaced playgrounds containing a recreation center, swings, tot-lot, and surrounded by the ever-present chain link fence.

Sutro Park is notable primarily for its views and access to the Pacific Ocean, including views of the headlands, Mile Rock and Seal Rocks. As it is located at the western tip of the area, Sutro Park functions more as a City-wide spot than a neighborhood resource. Mountain Lake Park is completely different. Located within the mass of the Presidio's open space, it is so effectively walled off by trees and bordering homes that it serves only those who know of its "secret location." Angelo Rossi Playground has a comparable amount of screening, but its location at the area's southeast corner makes it more accessible to the many residential neighborhoods about it, both inside and outside of the area.

b) Schools

The large, bulky form of George Washington High School stands out on the skyline and provides an important area-wide reference point. Views from the school are among the best in the area and include the Presidio, the Marin Hills, the ocean, Golden Gate Park and the downtown skyline.

Roosevelt Junior High School near Arguello and Geary is a brick structure of unique design. Its tall spire forms a visible focal point seen from Arguello. Other schools in the district stand out because they provide contrast to residential buildings surrounding them.

Arterial Movement

Richmond is divided into sub-areas by arterials which form visible edges of movement. They provide a consistent sense of order within the district.

Geary Boulevard is the primary east/west through corridor and connects the Great Highway, Playland and other oceanside areas to the City. It also serves as the primary link between the area and downtown areas. Other east/west routes are Fulton, Balboa and California, which feed moderate amounts of traffic into the area. California Street is an especially visible edge due to the street trees which line its entire length to its termination at the west edge of Lincoln Park.

City-wide north-south movement is concentrated on Park Presidio which moves traffic through the area between the Golden Gate Bridge and points south. Its green parkway and traffic volume form a strong visual/movement edge in sharp contrast to the residential development on either side. Other important north-south movement occurs on 25th Avenue and Arguello Street, which connect Golden Gate Park to the Presidio and feed traffic to and from Geary. A number of east/west streets dead end on Arguello, resulting in a substantial physical edge.

Public Utilities

The fire station at Geary and Point Lobos Avenue is an isolated brick structure of visual importance both as a focal point and as an architecturally interesting structure.

Institutions

Of the institutions in Richmond, the district's churches are especially important form elements, contributing a sense of visual interest. The Holy Virgin Russian Church on Geary is significant because of the Russian-style domes which rise above it to form a meaningful focal point. St. Monica's Church at 23rd Avenue and Geary and the Star-of-the-Sea Church at Geary and 8th Avenue are important because of their tall spires.

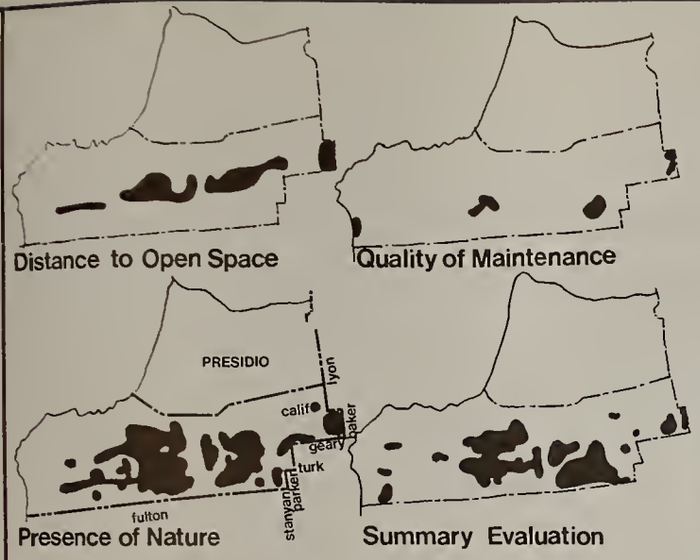
The Jewish Community Center at California and Presidio is a gateway into the Richmond district via California Street. Its dome distinguishes it from the surroundings. Temple Emanuel at Lake and Arguello is another dome form which is a strong focal point viewed from Arguello and higher points in the district.

The San Francisco Columbarium, at the end of Loraine Court, can be seen from Geary Boulevard. It is a domed structure which stands above the surrounding commercial and residential development.

There are several notable hospitals in Richmond, including the Federal Public Health Hospital in the Presidio, Children's Hospital and Hahnemann Hospital. The last two create a substantial institutional quality along California Street near Cherry Street. The French Hospital is a complex of old and new forms along Geary near 6th Avenue. The Federal Public Health Hospital in the Presidio at the foot of 15th Avenue and the Veterans Hospital in Ft. Miley are large, bulky forms which stand out against a natural backdrop.

RICHMOND

Internal Pattern and Image Survey 1969

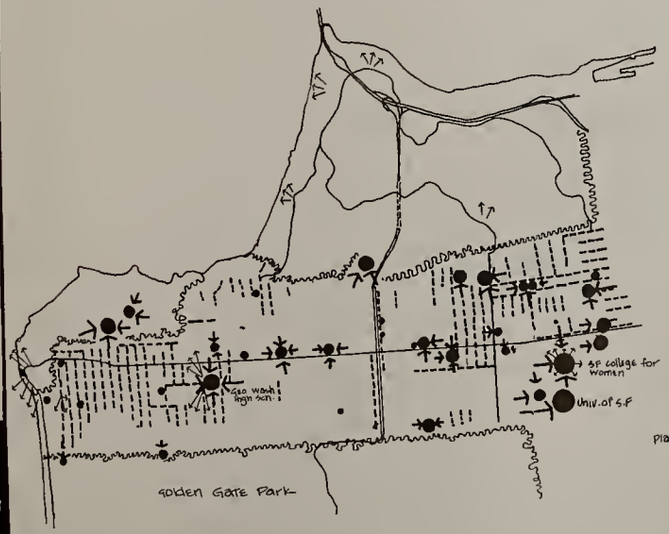


QUALITY OF ENVIRONMENT

(GENERALIZED)
BELOW AVERAGE & LOW RATED AREAS

ACTIVITY-MOVEMENT PATTERNS

- LOCAL COMMERCIAL
- CITYWIDE COMMERCIAL
- COMMUNITY FACILITY
- PEDESTRIAN ACTIVITY
- MAJOR MOVEMENT
- MINOR MOVEMENT
- MOVEMENT CONFLICT



FOCAL POINTS LANDMARKS VIEWS

- MAJOR FOCAL POINT
- MINOR FOCAL POINT
- DIRECTION VIEWED
- LANDMARK
- PRINCIPAL VIEW
- STREETS WITH GOOD VIEWS

PHYSICAL FORM ELEMENTS

- TOPOGRAPHIC EDGE
- STRONG BUILDING EDGE
- OTHER EDGE
- HIGH BUILDINGS
- CONSISTENT ARCH. CHARACTER
- SIGNIFICANT BLDGS: ARCH./HIST.
- OPEN OR GREEN SPACE

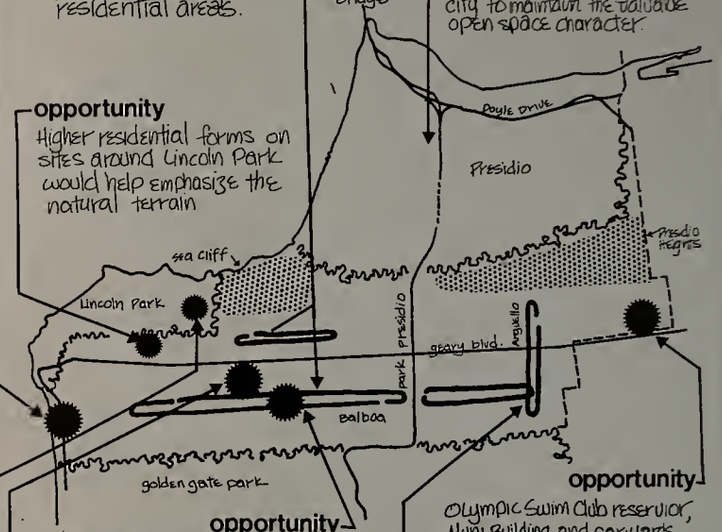
opportunity
Playland and the ocean front north to Cliff House is land that could be developed into new recreation uses, perhaps combining commercial and residential uses as well.

problem
Many sections can be characterized as visually monotonous because of the continuous street grid, similar building heights and overhead wires. Most new buildings intensify rather than alleviate this monotony.

opportunity
Many scattered blocks with architecturally or historically significant buildings.

problem
Small, separated shopping clusters in Richmond often lack visual distinction from surrounding residential areas.

opportunity
Creation of a master plan for the Presidio by Army and city to maintain the valuable open space character.



opportunity
Higher residential forms on sites around Lincoln Park would help emphasize the natural terrain

opportunity
Consolidating smaller commercial areas would be chance to provide public amenities and street design.

opportunity
Olympic Swim Club reservoir, Muni Building and car yards occupy a site where new high development would be desirable. Existing views should be maintained.

opportunity
Washington Heights and school site could be emphasized with higher forms such as high-rise educational complex or mix of community facilities and residences.

problem
East-west traffic flow is interrupted at Arguello, causing traffic problems.

opportunity
The City could acquire the Ft. Miley site for Planned Unit Development of 200 housing units, small public play area and possible educational facility.

opportunity
Richmond's wide, under-used streets could be used to overcome the monotonous character of some sections; such as landscaping center strips, street closings or variation through street tree planting.

preliminary INTERPRETATION: PROBLEMS OPPORTUNITIES

- AREAS FOR PRESERVATION
- MAJOR OPPORTUNITY
- MAJOR PROBLEM

RICHMOND PLANNING AREA

Buena Vista

The Buena Vista area is aptly named. It provides "good views" of all sections of San Francisco. Roughly triangular in shape, it lies near the geographical center of the city. It is bounded by Upper Market and 17th Streets on one side and by Stanyan and Fell Streets on the other two sides. Portions of these three sides are visually distinct boundaries. Market Street is one, by virture of its width and the diagonal slash it makes as it cuts across the city's grid street pattern. The masses of foliage of Golden Gate Park and the Panhandle along Stanyan and Fell Streets form the other strong boundary.

Hills and the views they provide are the most notable visual elements in this district. They effectively divide the planning area into three subareas: Haight-Ashbury to the northeast, Buena Vista Heights in the center, and Haight-Fillmore to the east. The Haight-Fillmore actually has an inner district, created by the change in the orientation of the street grid and augmented by the presence of the "J" streetcar line along Duboce Avenue. This area, known as the Duboce Triangle, is bounded by Market, Duboce and Castro Streets.

Aside from the hills and the districts they define, the patterns of man-made forms complement these land masses. In this district's level areas, buildings generally form large, relatively

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uniform block-sized masses. In doing so, they reinforce the gridiron pattern of the streets and sharply define the channels of space these streets make. On the hills, however, the form of building development is more varied; buildings are grouped together more in relation to the slope of the hills; and, as such, they are seen as relatively free-form patterns and clusters of buildings.

In short, the major assets of the Buena Vista planning area are:

1. The hills and their slopes offer many fine views of San Francisco andthe entire Bay area.
2. Man-made development patterns are generally harmonius with the area's landforms.
3. The summits of the hills are in public ownership.
4. The contours of these hills help define a variety of distinctive communities.

Residential Character

The level areas of Buena Vista are carpeted with a uniform mass of attached single- and multiple-family homes. In a number of instances there are excellent examples of careful rehabilitation of old Victorian-style houses; many other homes await this distinction. In their present state, they are poorly maintained or dilapidated.

As the land slopes up toward the summits of the hills, the building types on it become more varied; the quality of their maintenance improves. The streets begin to wind, losing their former association with the gridiron pattern below them. Here, the curving streets, mature landscaping, reduced densities of buildings and more architecturally significant homes produce an atmosphere which makes Buena Vista Heights distinct from its surrounding neighborhoods.

One other residential pattern is noteworthy. There is only one public housing project here. Occupying an entire block site at Buchanan and Haight Streets, these units are characterized by their massiveness, their interior parking lots and their coat of pink paint. They are distinctive, if not carefully integrated with other existing homes.

Commercial Character

Aside from small scattered commercial buildings found in the district, there are really six main clusters of commercial development.

The first of these, well known as the "Haight-Ashbury" is a commercial strip left estranged by her days of flower children and the general "hippie" cult. Many of its stores are empty;

their boarded-up fronts testify to the problems which have accompanied notoriety. Other shops still do a brisk trade, but the area is in visual limbo.

In contrast to this area, the "Haight-Fillmore" commercial area is smaller, serving a predominately black neighborhood. Here, the sidewalks bustle with activity even though a few vacancies are noticeable. Similar to this commercial district in its concentration of activity, is a small center located around the intersection of Cole and Carl Streets. This commercial area serves people living near the west portal of the Sunset Tunnel. Its range of commercial services is limited.

Both Market Street and Divisadero Streets are commercial "strips" in the sense that they lack visual focus for their commercial activities. In both places there is a variety of services, both mix neighborhood commercial services with ones such as entertainment spots (along Divisadero) and large supermarkets (along Market Street). Here the similarities end.

Divisadero's commercial activity is far more apparent. Its two-way traffic is often congested by double-parked service vehicles, people crowd about storefronts; and the buildings themselves rarely have set-backs to relieve this compressed

picture of activity. On the other hand, Market Street's width diffuses this visual picture of intensity. Traffic volume here is so much larger that visually, the commercial activity occurring on either side of the street is separated by the flow of vehicles and streetcars.

The sixth and last definable spot of commercial activity in this area is along the east side of Octavia Street. Its extent and range of services are more neighborhood-oriented and less traffic-compounded as those found along either Market or Divisadero Streets.

Community Facilities

a) Parks

Parks are this area's most distinctive community facility. They crown the top of the hills and hold them for all San Franciscans to use and enjoy, and they give this planning area's residents a strong visual sense of the presence of nature. Further, many residents have views of Golden Gate Park to their west or of Mount Sutro to their south.

At present, however, all three of this area's parks have opportunities for improvement. Its largest park, Buena Vista Park, is covered with a forest of trees. Its design for passive recreation with paths which meander through this forest remains

incomplete because trees obscure views of the background hills and of San Francisco. Buena Vista Park's design for active recreation is similarly incomplete, a tot-lot and tennis court are at present its only developed facilities.

The Corona Heights Playground lies less than a quarter of a mile to the southeast of Buena Vista Park. Unlike the Park, this playground has almost no vegetation; steep slopes of bare rock provide little opportunities for recreation facilities. At present, however, areas of this large playground are developed and contain the Randall Museum, a basketball court, a tot-lot and two sets of tennis courts. Finding this park is difficult without explicit directions. Visually, this should be unnecessary, the playground lies within two blocks of the east portal of the Twin Peaks Tunnel; the opportunity remains to make the link between a major public transportation stop and this municipal recreation area.

Less than half a mile to the north of the playground, Duboce Park is better linked to a major streetcar stop. Situated at the east portal of the Sunset Tunnel, this grass-covered space extends for a block along the streetcar tracks on Duboce Avenue. The stop is so located that passengers are discharged at the center of one side of the park. From there the Park's principal facility, the Recreational Arts Building, is clearly visible.

In addition to its effective link with the streetcar system, the park is well-defined by buildings which border it on three sides.

b) Schools

Of the three schools in this planning area, none are of any visual significance. A fourth school, the Gratten School, has been recently demolished, but its paved, cyclone-fenced, unlandscaped play area provides a needed, but visually distracting amenity for those people who live near it.

Arterial Movement

This planning area is fortunate. Traffic through the area is relatively sparse, traffic along its boundaries is heavy, underscoring these boundaries as being a visual edge for the area. Major traffic volumes are along Market Street and the one-way couples of Oak and Fell Streets. Relatively heavy traffic is along the other boundaries, 17th and Stanyan Streets.

Principal thoroughfares are Duboce Street in the east-west direction and Castro/Divisadero in the north-south direction.

This area is touched by the effect of the Freeway system. The mass of the Central Skyway and the noise of its traffic isolates several blocks at the eastern end of the area. In

addition, the freeway is the prime generator of the high volumes of traffic along Fell and Oak Streets.

Institutions

There are only three visually distinctive institutions here; all three occupy prominent locations. Saint Joseph's and Franklin Hospitals are two of them; both command important sites and have good views of San Francisco. They are landmarks from within their area as well.

The last institution, the U.S. Mint, has been upstaged by recent commercial development. Located at the corner of Duboce and Market Streets the building sits on top of a massive rock outcropping, and forms a dramatic fortress-like setting confronting anyone passing by it. Unfortunately, that passerby is asked to view this scene through acres of parking, a large supermarket, and a gas station.

opportunity

Future development of new family-oriented residences along the Panhandle

problem

Incompatible mixture of housing, commercial, and light industrial uses occurr east of freeway

problem

Much of the commercial on Haight st is dilapidated, vacant or poorly maintained.

opportunity

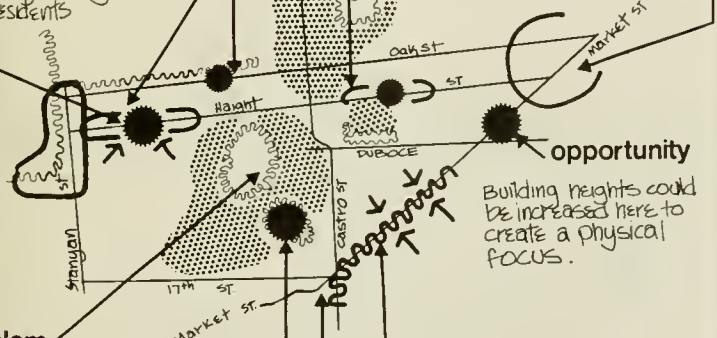
Many historic and architecturally significant homes could be restored as some have been. This could set the renewal character for Buena Vista

problem

Many areas, especially east and north of the Park are characterized by poor maintenance and a lack of visual variety.

opportunity

Favorable conditions for restoring Haight st to a pleasant shopping place are the surrounding high residential densities and easy walking radius for residents



opportunity

Building heights could be increased here to create a physical focus.

problem

Buena Vista Park is not actively used due to a lack of recreational facilities and inadequate policing. Views are blocked by overgrown trees

opportunity

Market st. Beautification program could be extended to upper Market st. to provide much-needed amenities.

opportunity

Corona Heights, because of extreme topography is underused. It offers an opportunity for multi-use purposes. playground, a mix of residences and recreation or even heavily planted with flowering shrubs

problem

Upper Market st. commercial occurrs on a wide, busy street with few pedestrian amenities and no dominant image. The six-way intersection is a point of traffic congestion.

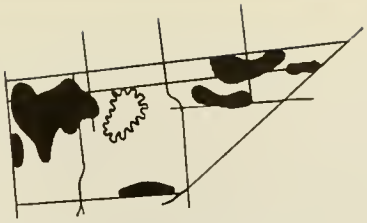
preliminary INTERPRETATION: PROBLEMS OPPORTUNITIES

AREAS FOR PRESERVATION
MAJOR OPPORTUNITY
MAJOR PROBLEM

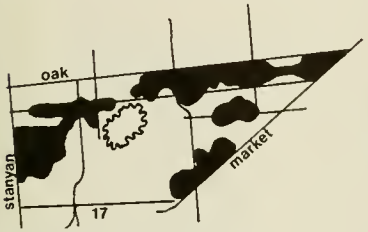
BUENA VISTA PLANNING AREA

BUENA VISTA

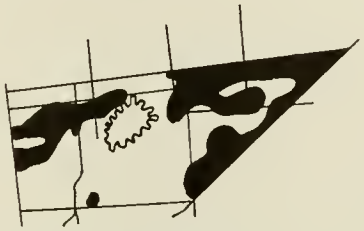
Distance to Open Space



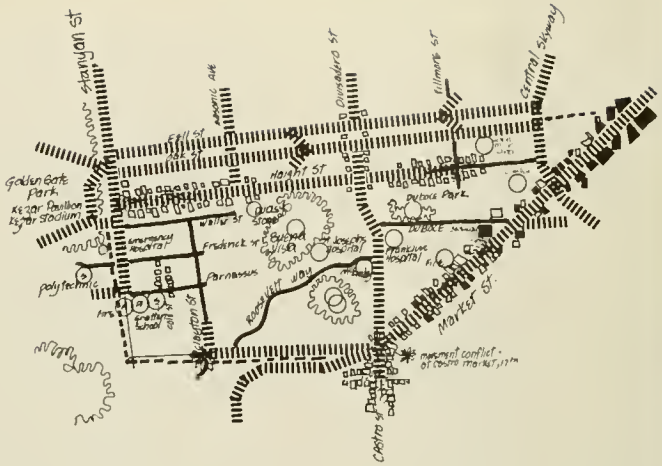
Quality of Maintenance



Presence of Nature



Summary Evaluation



QUALITY OF ENVIRONMENT

(GENERALIZED)
BELOW AVERAGE & LOW RATED AREAS

ACTIVITY-MOVEMENT PATTERNS

- LOCAL COMMERCIAL
- CITYWIDE COMMERCIAL
- COMMUNITY FACILITY
- PEDESTRIAN ACTIVITY
- MAJOR MOVEMENT
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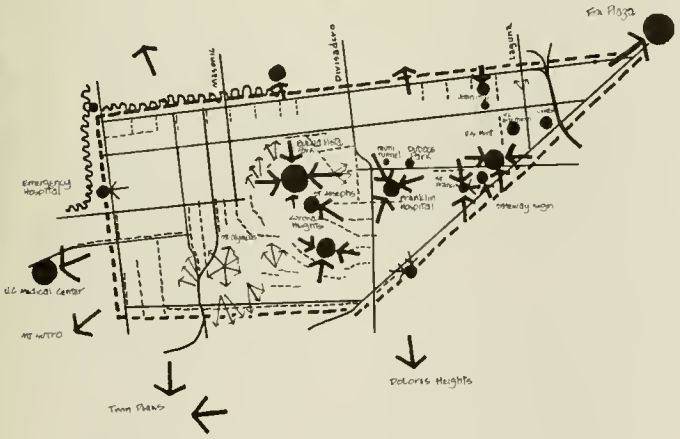

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Internal Pattern and Image Survey 1969

SOUTH OF MARKET

The area delineated for urban design evaluation extends beyond what most San Franciscan's consider South of Market. The boundaries include an area extending from near Army Street north to within three blocks of Market Street and from San Francisco Bay west to the James Lick Freeway.

Three of these boundaries are visually distinct. Only Howard Street, the northern boundary, is visually indistinct as it is dominated by the strong vertical elements of buildings in the Central Business District.

South of Market is sub-divided into three areas, all of which have marked differences in building forms. The first area lies between Howard Street and the James Lick Freeway. The area functions as the support area for the Central Business District, and its building forms are characterized by large blocks of low, horizontal masses. The second sub-area, the "China-Central Basin," is an important industrial location containing larger and more massive building forms. The third sub-area, Potrero Hill, is in the southernmost part of the planning area, and it is clearly differentiated by steep slopes and small-scale houses.

A substantial part of the South of Market area was created by filling a former salt marsh. Two hills break the otherwise level terrain of the area. Potrero Hill is a southern focal point of the area and is quite visible. The other hill, Rincon Hill, has been lost in the maze of freeway ramps and elevated thoroughfares marking the end of the Bay Bridge. As such, these highway ramps form a visual mass and, along with Potrero Hill, are the prominent reference points within this planning area.

Residential Character

Not only is Potrero Hill the area's distinctive land form, it contains two of the area's three distinctive residential building patterns. The first, composed of single- and multiple-family dwelling units, is found along the hill's northern and western slopes. Many of these units have been rehabilitated and are architecturally distinctive. Most of them have pitched roofs and are set back slightly from the streets. Often residences have high retaining walls on the uphill side of the street, and, when combined with gardens, they form a pleasing and interesting street facade. The other distinctive residential building pattern found here is a series of two-story linear blocks of public housing which extend down the eastern and southern slopes. While these blocks have excellent views of San Francisco Bay, from a visual standpoint, they are uninspiring.

The best examples of the area's third residential building pattern are found frequently in the area immediately south of Market Street. Here, there are many two-to-four story apartment buildings and boarding houses. Such units are usually poorly maintained. Often they are sandwiched between industrial and commercial buildings or they line the alleyways. The quality of this building pattern is in direct contrast with the many residential amenities found on Potrero Hill.

Industrial Character

South of Market contains the City's largest industrial district. The sub-area immediately south of Market Street includes wholesaling, distribution, and servicing industries. In the area extending south from China Basin to Potrero Hill are heavier industrial activities such as railroad yards and steel fabrication plants.

Both these areas suffer from functional conflicts, visual confusion, congested streets and inadequate parking or loading facilities. The repetition of uniform one- and two-story buildings for many blocks is visually unfortunate. This repetition is not alleviated by landscaping, and the overall effect is monotonous.

Both the Burgermeister Brewery at Tenth Street and Harrison and the Pacific Gas and Electric gas tanks are prominent from within the area and from other parts of the City. In addition to these elements, ship superstructures and pier cranes present a variety of visual compositions and an ever-changing silhouette for the industrial district's eastern boundary.

Commercial Character

South of Market has two distinctive areas with commercial buildings. A major concentration of office and commercial buildings is centered along New Montgomery Street. Several large structures have been rehabilitated in this area for commercial uses. The second area, entirely different in character, exists along 18th Street and serves as a retail shopping district for Potrero Hill residents.

Community Facilities

Schools, parks, and other heavily-used community facilities in South of Market have unusual potential for strong urban design proposals.

a) Parks

Of the four parks in this area, three are located on or near the primary residential sub-area, Potrero Hill. These are Jackson Playground, Potrero Hill Park, and McKinley Square. The fourth, South Park, is tucked alongside the Bay Bridge approach ramps.

Jackson Park's recreation center, tennis court, basketball court, and tot-lot appear to be an adequate selection of facilities. However, the park would be more usable if better linked to nearby residential communities.

Potrero Hill Park, at the peak of the hill, is the primary recreation open space for the community. It provides a large gymnasium, tennis courts, and a tot-lot. However, it also presents a sharply defined barrier of trees and steep slopes to the public housing units to its immediate south and east. Better access for residential communities adjacent to the park should be provided.

McKinley Park, sited along the western edge of Potrero Hill and the eight-lane James Lick Freeway, provides its users with excellent views of the City. Access to it is poor. The freeway blocks it to the west and south. Vermont Avenue, similar to Lombard Street, twists past the park to the east. A low, concrete wall hampers views of the park along the northern edge. Over all, the park appears insufficiently developed.

South Park, which is located just south of the Bay Bridge approach ramps, is located between 2nd and 3rd Streets. It is a small, oval-shaped park surrounded by the bleak facade of poorly-maintained industrial and residential buildings. At this time, it

represents the only outdoor play space for many children of low-income families living in the area.

b) Schools

The schools in South of Market reflect many of the area's problems as a residential location. At present they are crowded, and their students are often housed in temporary structures. Two schools, the Bessie Charmichael and the Irving School School, are old, wooden-frame structures. The Starr King Elementary School on Potrero Hill is in bad repair.

Contrasted with this is the large Potrero Hill Junior High, now under construction. It will be significant, not only for the addition of needed educational facilities, but also for its location in a natural basin on the northern slope of Potrero Hill. This excellent location will make the school a visual focus for residences surrounding the site on three sides.

b) Public Buildings

The Hall of Justice at Bryant near Seventh Street is a massive, white structure which can be seen from many locations in South of Market. It is also a dominant form viewed from the James Lick Freeway. The building stands many stories higher than those surrounding it and is silhouetted against the elevated structures of the freeway. It is the most distinct man-made form element in the northwest corner of this planning area.

In contrast, the Southern Pacific Passenger Terminal is lost in a maze of industrial buildings and provides a weak symbol for thousands of commuters who pass through it daily.

Arterial Movement

The James Lick Freeway is a strong visual boundary for the western edge of the South of Market area. As it curves toward the Bay Bridge, its elevated structure isolates the sub-area north toward Market Street. The major streets which parallel the freeway - Folsom, Harrison, and Bryant Streets - carry large amounts of traffic and form a distribution grid to supply the Central Business District. These streets and the one-way thoroughfares which cross them are congested during peak commuter hours.

The Southern Embarcadero Freeway, similar to the James Lick Freeway as a linear form, runs north through the area, cutting along the eastern side of Potrero Hill. The freeway is under construction at this time but appears to divide the area more by the activity on it than by blocking visual continuity.

Third Street is a major truck route connecting China Basin and the business districts. Although it has the appearance of an efficient through-corridor for automobiles, it does not function well because of slow truck traffic.

Public Utilities

Pacific Gas and Electric's gas storage tanks are among the most prominent man-made forms in South of Market. Three of them near 23rd and 3rd Streets and one at the southeast base of Potrero Hill are visible skyline elements throughout the City.

The Water Department's reservoir and water tower on the top of Potrero Hill crown the hill with a distinct cylindrical form set in a mantle of green foliage. They, too, are clearly visible throughout the City.

Institutions

There are two churches in the South of Market area that are architecturally significant. St. Joseph's Catholic Church near Tenth and Howard Streets is a well-maintained, well-landscaped, Spanish-style structure whose gold domes can be seen from a number of points within the area, particularly from the James Lick Freeway. St. Michael's Ukrainian Orthodox Church on 7th near Howard is similarly outstanding. However, it is poorly maintained and shows signs of deterioration.

problem

A major problem is traffic and the lack of a defined circulation system, designed to accomodate the areas diverse kinds of movement

opportunity

There are some pockets of rehabilitable housing and several pieces of vacant or underused land that could be developed for residential uses.

problem

There is an inadequate supply of off-street loading berths.

opportunity

South Park and immediate surroundings could be renewed for commercial residential and open space uses.

opportunity

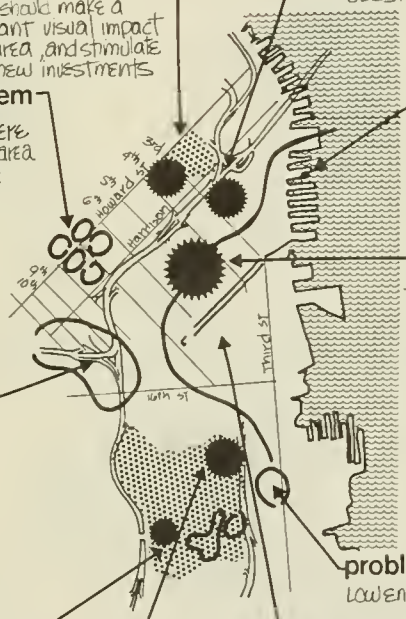
Renewal efforts of the 25 acre Redevelopment project - Yerba Buena Center should make a significant visual impact in the area, and stimulate other new investments

problem

Residential units here and in other parts of area are sub-standard and sandwiched between incompatible uses

problem

Physical and visual access to waterfront is minimal.



opportunity

The area's scale, wide streets, large economic enterprises and many potential sites is a design opportunity for redevelopment

problem

Freeway cuts through area creating visual confusion and traffic problems

problem

Low environmental quality

opportunity

The 10.8 acre Wisconsin Street warehousing site is an opportunity to provide approx. 200 residential units

problem

Much of this area appears mis used or under used The result is a visual confusion and functional conflicts

opportunity

High forms here could accentuate the hills visual importance and citywide identity

problem

There is a shortage of usable open, recreation space near residential areas

preliminary INTERPRETATION: PROBLEMS OPPORTUNITIES

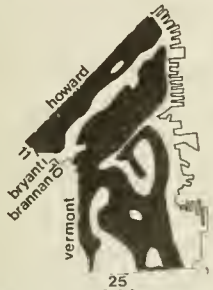
AREAS FOR PRESERVATION
MAJOR OPPORTUNITY
MAJOR PROBLEM

SOUTH OF MARKET PLANNING AREA

SOUTH OF MARKET

Distance to Open Space

Quality of Maintenance



Presence of Nature

Summary Evaluation

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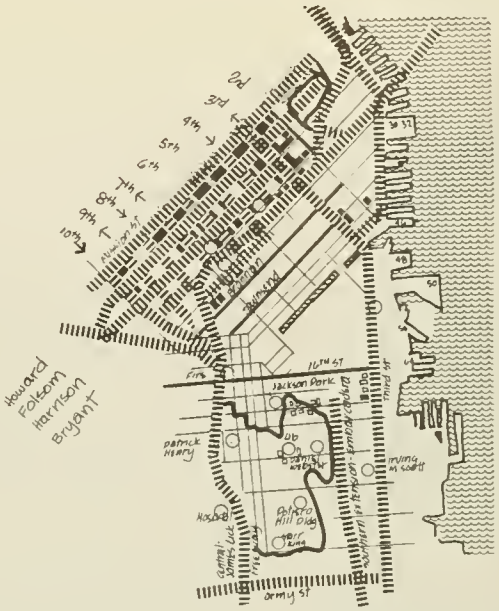

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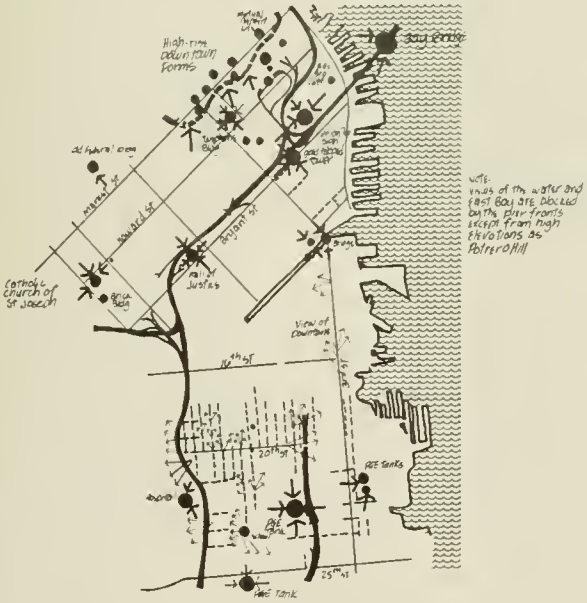

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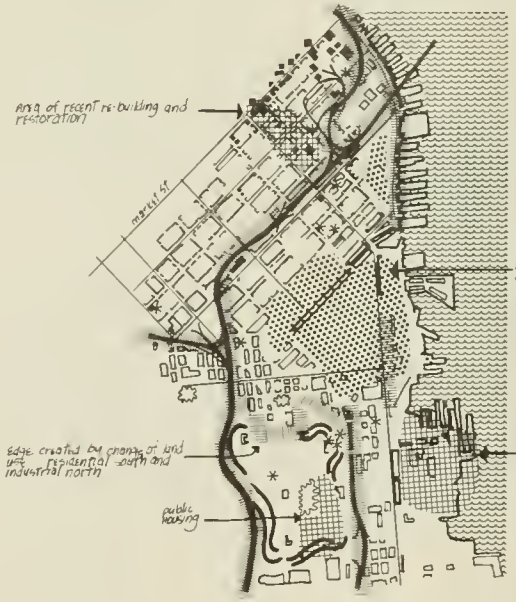

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Internal Pattern and Image Survey 1969

Freeways and mountains define the South Central Area. The James Lick Freeway forms the eastern boundary and the Southern Freeway curves and marks both the western and northern boundaries. The southern and remaining boundary is the San Francisco City and County line, visually accentuated by the massive backdrop of the San Bruno Mountains.

South Central's main feature is its central hill which is topped by McLaren Park, the City's second largest. The park's 317 acres preserves an outline of natural forms which is visible from a great portion of both the district and the City. The hill slopes, extending from the park, provide many opportunities for fine views in all directions. Prominent landmarks seen from the McLaren Park hill include Twin Peaks, Bernal Heights, Mount Davidson and the San Bruno Mountains.

McLaren hill divides the area into four districts or sub-areas. The most westerly is the valley between the Southern Freeway and combination of Alemany Boulevard and Mission Street. Another sub-area extends from the east side of these two streets to the edge of the Park. The third sub-area is Visitacion Valley and the fourth is the Park itself. McLaren Park and the massive hill are remarkable visual assets, and there is virtually an

unlimited potential for developing excellent recreation facilities and complementary man-made forms.

Residential Character

This is one of the city's principal residential area; nearly 64,000 people live in the South Central and most reside in either attached or detached single-family houses. The result is a relatively unpunctuated mass of low-rise houses spread evenly throughout the area. Most of these homes have little variation in their architectural style or their exterior color. The monotony of this pattern is reinforced by a general lack of private landscaping or of street planting. Some unified groups of houses occur and are as much the product of subtle changes in street layout, topography, or arterial movement patterns as they are of any architectural distinction. Views have little effect on improving the present residential quality. Most residential structures are poorly sited and disregard existing views, many of which would provide impressive panoramas of the City.

There are two other notable residential patterns in the South Central Area: the Sunnyvale Public Housing complex and the Geneva Towers development. Sunnyvale is distinctive from other public housing projects elsewhere in the city because of a good physical relationship among structures, winding roads and site. A pleasant environment was created by placing the rectangular-

shaped buildings at right angles to the winding streets and providing mature trees and grass-covered open-spaces around them.

Geneva Towers, located in Visitacion Valley, contain the area's tallest buildings which are prominent landmarks for only a small segment of the planning area. The surrounding hills screen the housing complex. But from within the Valley, the towers, contrasted with the two-story townhouses at their feet, are visually distinctive.

Commercial Character

The primary concentration of commercial development occurs along Mission Street. Secondary areas are located along San Bruno Avenue and Leland Avenue. Isolated commercial buildings are scattered throughout the rest of the planning area.

Mission Street serves the western section of this planning area. It is intensively developed. Three locations along Mission are visually distinctive. The northernmost of these, around Mission and Brazil, is well marked by the mass of a movie theater and the height of an adjacent high-rise office building. The second spot, at Mission and Geneva, has visual impact because of pedestrian and vehicular activity. The last area along Mission south of Geneva to the city limits, is characterized by strip commercial development.

Industrial Character

Most of this area's industrial development occurs along the Old Bayshore Boulevard in the vicinity of Visitacion Valley. Buildings here are characterized by low, flat-roofed, warehouse-type structures interspersed with vacant lots or large parking and truck-loading areas. Viewed from higher parts of the planning area, this industrial sector presents a contrast in both texture and form to adjacent residential patterns such as those about Geneva Towers. Traffic generated by this industrial district can bypass residential developments because of access to the Freeways.

Community Facilities

South Central's community facilities provide visual contrast to its predominately residential pattern. Notable among them are its two parks, one of its eight playgrounds, and several schools.

a) Parks

McLaren Park's significance, mentioned earlier is characterized by large grass fields, crisscrossed with motorcycle tracks, and dotted with clusters of mature trees. Because of its size much of the park awaits development even though it already contains a golf course, a swimming pool and two playgrounds. At present the park is isolated from nearby residential areas by rows of attached houses. A major asset of the park is the

impressive and unexpected panorama of the central business district, San Bruno Mountain, and the Bay.

b) Schools

Schools in the South Central Area are noticeable elements within the fabric of predominant residential development. Surrounding large areas of open space make them visually distinctive. At present such distinctive schools and adjacent open spaces are found evenly distributed in the planning area with the exception of Visitacion Valley. Occasionally two adjacent schools have space which combines to form an even larger unit. The Portola Junior High/Taylor Elementary Schools and the Simpson Bible School/Hill Crest School are good examples of this effect.

Arterial Movement

In the South Central Area, arterial streets are, by and large, located on the periphery and provide convenient links to nearby freeways. The only exception is Geneva Avenue, which connects Visitacion Valley to the area's western residential districts. The freeways themselves form a visible border of landscaping, concrete and vehicular movement.

Some of these arterials are distinctive. Mission Street creates a boundary of activity and building forms because of its commercial development. Alemany Boulevard, which parallels Mission Street, is characterized by the residential development along

its sides and by the steady flow of traffic. Bayshore Boulevard is an active, noisy freeway access and exit road. Like Geneva Avenue it carries truck traffic to and from the planning area's industrial sector at Visitacion Valley.

A through-street, Mansell Street is distinctive as an entryway into McLaren Park. Its continuation, Persia Street, lacks landscaping and remains undistinctive as the western entryway.

Public Utilities

Some Water Department facilities are visually significant in South Central. The University Mound Reservoir near the northeast corner of McLaren Park is twelve blocks square and has peripheral landscaping. The water tower at the summit of McLaren Park is a dominant reference point on the skyline as seen from many parts of San Francisco.

The San Francisco Municipal Railway Car Barn is both visually prominent and architecturally interesting. Unfortunately, the red brick structure and the adjacent parcel of land are in a state of poor maintenance.

Institutions

The Jewish Home for the Elderly and the University Mound Ladies' Home are similar both in function and appearance. Their brick facades and Colonial style of architecture make them visually

distinctive. The location of the Jewish Home along Mission Street at Silver Avenue makes it a significant entry point into the northwestern part of the planning area.

The Home of the Good Shepherd Convent is a large, brick building on a forested site adjoining the north side of McLaren Park. It is an architecturally notable structure, although not easily visible from streets other than those in the immediate neighborhood.

problem

Environmental problems vary from neighborhood to neighborhood in South Central. Generally they are low maintenance, lack of street landscaping or overhead utility wires.

problem

Many of the area's parks are inaccessible for residents John McLaren is a good example, auto circulation routes are limited and pedestrian access is difficult.

opportunity

A location suitable for high-density residential development to breakup the visual monotony that prevails

opportunity

Gottingen St. between the 2 schools could be closed off and developed into a community plaza and also augment students recreation needs

opportunity

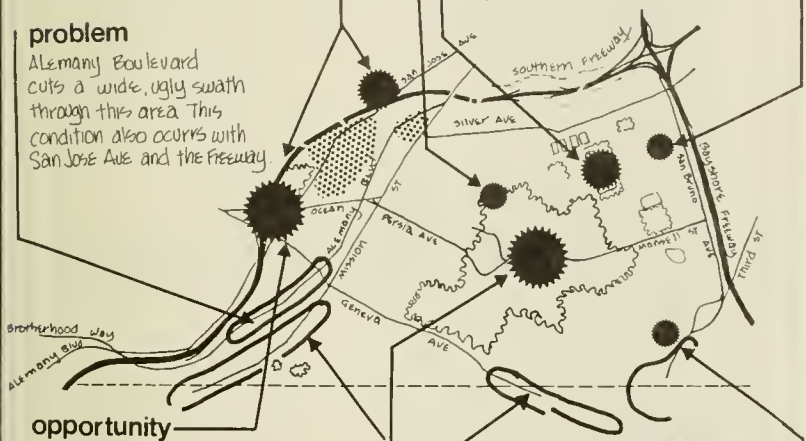
The two future BARTD stations are a development-inducing potential.

opportunity

Future air-rights development over the reservoir and re-use of the green house lands are opportunities to provide needed residential units.

problem

ALemany Boulevard cuts a wide, ugly swath through this area This condition also ocurrs with San Jose Ave and the Freeway.



opportunity

A significant design potential lies with the large amount of publically-owned land in close proximity to this BART station

opportunity

Visitacion Valley Community Center could easily be connected with a walk-way like plaza to the shops on Leland Avenue

Also, water department lands could be used to provide small neighborhood open spaces that are needed

opportunity

John McLaren Park could contribute to the identity of South Central by increasing the variety of activities provided in the park and improving circulation access

problem

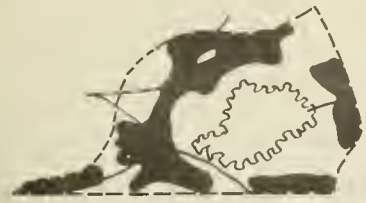
Lower Mission St and Geneva Ave are visually unpleasant commercial strips with large expanses of parking lots and a confusing separation between street and adjacent uses

preliminary INTERPRETATION: PROBLEMS OPPORTUNITIES

AREAS FOR PRESERVATION
MAJOR OPPORTUNITY
MAJOR PROBLEM

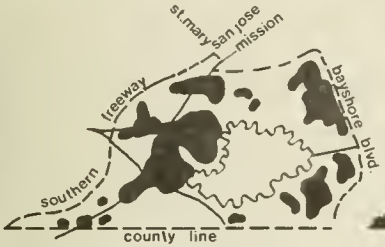
SOUTH CENTRAL PLANNING AREA

SOUTH CENTRAL



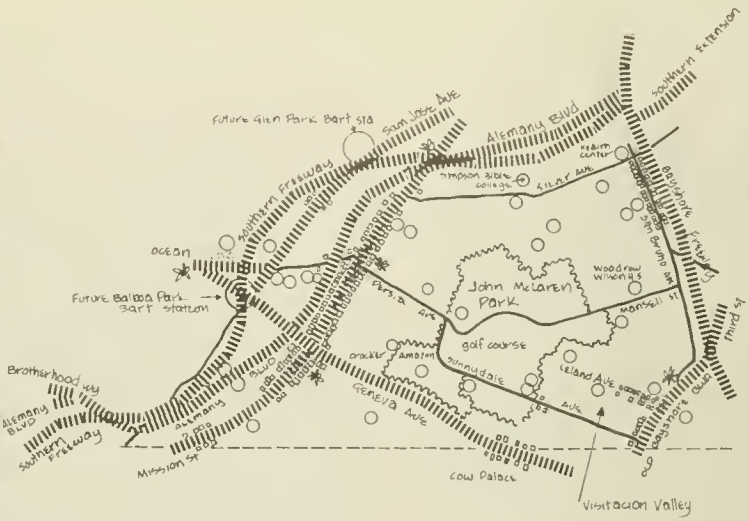
Distance to Open Space

Quality of Maintenance



Presence of Nature

Summary Evaluation



QUALITY OF ENVIRONMENT

(GENERALIZED)
BELOW AVERAGE & LOW RATED AREAS

ACTIVITY-MOVEMENT PATTERNS

- LOCAL COMMERCIAL
- CITYWIDE COMMERCIAL
- COMMUNITY FACILITY
- PEDESTRIAN ACTIVITY
- MAJOR MOVEMENT
- MINOR MOVEMENT
- MOVEMENT CONFLICT

FOCAL POINTS LANDMARKS VIEWS

- MAJOR FOCAL POINT
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- DIRECTION VIEWED
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- STREETS WITH GOOD VIEWS

PHYSICAL FORM ELEMENTS

- TOPOGRAPHIC EDGE
- STRONG BUILDING EDGE
- OTHER EDGE
- HIGH BUILDINGS
- CONSISTENT ARCH. CHARACTER
- SIGNIFICANT BLDGS: ARCH./HIST.
- OPEN OR GREEN SPACE
  Location of trees in McLaren Park

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INGLESIDE

Ingleside, the planning area in the City's southwest corner, is bounded by three major arterial routes and the Pacific Ocean. The northern boundary is a combination of Sloat, Portola, and O'Shaughnessy Boulevard. To the east there are the parallel routes of BART tracks and the Southern Freeway; and the city limits define the area to the south.

While arterial streets delineate the area, the most impressive physical distinctions are changes in elevation. From sea level the land climbs nearly 940 feet to the cross on top of Mount Davidson. From this highest point in San Francisco one has a good picture of this area's major visual assets. The most dominant is the pattern of residential buildings on the rolling topography. Views to the north or south have few distinctive elements within the area, other than these residential patterns. But views to the west contain park-like expanses of open space -- three golf courses, Lake Merced, Fleishhacker Playground and Zoo, and of course the Pacific Ocean. The western section of Ingleside contains the high-rise residential towers in Parkmerced, the sprawl of parking spaces about the Stonestown shopping center, and the undeveloped area of open space between San Francisco State College and Lowell High School. To the east one may see other large concentrations of open space formed by San Francisco City College and the Balboa Reservoir.

Residential Character

Prior to World War II this area was relatively unpopulated. Since then it has been intensively developed, primarily with detached units of single-family residences. In Ingleside, there is great evidence of stucco as a building material, and only a few of the older houses are of wooden construction. Such a pattern of materials and housing units sets this area apart from other parts of the city. This residential pattern characterizes the eastern half of this area and is altered only by variations in street pattern and periodic open spaces, or other public facilities such as reservoirs or schools.

There are two exceptions to the overall residential pattern and both are found in the western half of the planning area. Most notable are the previously mentioned high-rise forms of Parkmerced, which may be seen from many points throughout the city. The other pattern comes from blocks of town-houses in Parkmerced and is repeated to the north in the Stonestown Apartments complex.

Commercial Character

Commercial development in Ingleside occurs as strip development along arterials or as shopping centers. Both of these types are visible primarily in terms of their vehicular and pedestrian activity, not in terms of their architectural forms.

Of the strip commercial sections, the most concentrated is on Ocean Boulevard, between Junipero Serra Boulevard and 19th Avenue. Here, there is a high degree of pedestrian activity, not only because of another nearby shopping center, but also because it is a major stop for both the "M" and "K" streetcar lines. The other commercial area is more typically a "shopping strip", running nearly a mile along the eastern end of Ocean Boulevard near San Francisco City College.

There are two important shopping centers in Ingleside. The Parkview G.E.T. Department Store is the smaller of the two, covering the equivalent of three blocks. It contains an extensive parking area and three principal buildings. The complex provides a noticeable break in the visual pattern of residences, which is accentuated by a relatively high degree of pedestrian and traffic congestion along Sloat Boulevard.

The second important center, "Stonestown", is by far the largest center in the planning area. Covering roughly three times the area of the G.E.T. facility, it fronts on 19th Street at Sloat Boulevard. Featuring several major department stores it is surrounded by extraordinarily large parking lots. The combination of flat expanses of asphalt and low-rise blocks of stores provide a fitting complement to the busy, hurried quality of traffic along 19th Avenue. Such a large development is a fitting northern entry-point into the planning area.

Community Facilities

Facilities in Ingleside are widely dispersed and are visually separate entities. One high school and two colleges are prominent elements in the area. Water Department facilities are also prominent and have a potential for recreational or other community needs.

a) Parks

Over 900 acres of open space lie within Ingleside's boundaries. However, much of this acreage is in the extreme western part of the area and not easily accessible to Ingleside residents. The large, 40-acre park on Mount Davidson offers breathtaking views of the city, but it does not serve the immediate neighborhood's needs in recreation space. Only two other facilities in the area of significance; both are playgrounds. Of these, Aptos Playground on Ocean Boulevard is the least developed, although views outward from this site contain many local landmarks and focal points. Ocean View Playground is well developed as a recreation center with several baseball and softball diamonds and an active recreation program.

b) Schools

The two colleges are the most distinctive schools in the planning area. San Francisco State, located along Nineteenth Avenue,

is marked by intensive pedestrian activity. It is more visible in the front pages of a newspaper than from 19th Avenue, primarily because its buildings are architecturally unremarkable and well screened from most approaches by dense mature landscaping.

Visually, San Francisco City College is more apparent, particularly from the Southern Freeway. It, too, is well marked by pedestrian activity along Ocean Boulevard at the end of the "K" streetcar line.

Lowell High School is the third notable group of school buildings. The school's size and extensive open space complement the scale of Stonestown and San Francisco State College which border it on east and south sides.

The remainder of schools in the area are distinctive primarily because they provide breaks in the otherwise uniform residential blocks.

Arterial Movement

As mentioned earlier, arterial streets for the most part delineate the Ingleside planning area. All carry major amounts of traffic, with the exception of O'Shaughnessy Boulevard. In

addition to these boundary streets, major movement splits the area in a north-south axis along 19th Avenue and Junipero Serra Boulevard. Except for the arterial streets, the district does not reflect an intense degree of vehicular movement. Movement on certain arterials is frequently sporadic and interrupted; through traffic along 19th Avenue must contend with Stonestown shoppers, San Francisco State College students, and Parkmerced residents. In addition, drivers along this route must navigate the other hazards created by the presence of streetcars and streetcar tracks. Ocean Boulevard is comparable to 19th Avenue in congestion.

Last, three major intersections (Junipero Serra and 19th, Junipero Serra and Sloat, and Sloat and 19th Avenue) are dangerous, sometimes because of precarious street angles, sometimes because of complex traffic movements at these locations.

Public Utilities

There are four Water Department facilities which provide extensive amounts of open space in Ingleside. Lake Merced is the largest and its relatively undeveloped shoreline speaks of its future recreational potential. The second facility, located near Stern Grove on Sloat Boulevard, is the Central Pumping Station. Its large grassy areas are immediately accessible from nearby residences. The Balboa Reservoir, covering the equivalent of six residential blocks, has no landscaping. However, a high

embankment screens its extensive, barren concrete roof from nearby streets or residences. Stanford Heights Reservoir on the northeast face of Mount Davidson Park provides open space for nearby residents to view, as well as people traveling on Rockdale Drive. The reservoir has little extra room for landscaping or recreational development.

problem

There is a poor visual and physical relationship between San Francisco State College, Stonestown and the natural expanses of Lake Merced.

opportunity

City College, the Balboa Reservoir air rights, and the future BART station near Ocean at San Jose and Geneva offer a combined opportunity: physical definition to area, college expansion over reservoir or combination of housing, recreational facilities and commercial uses.

opportunity

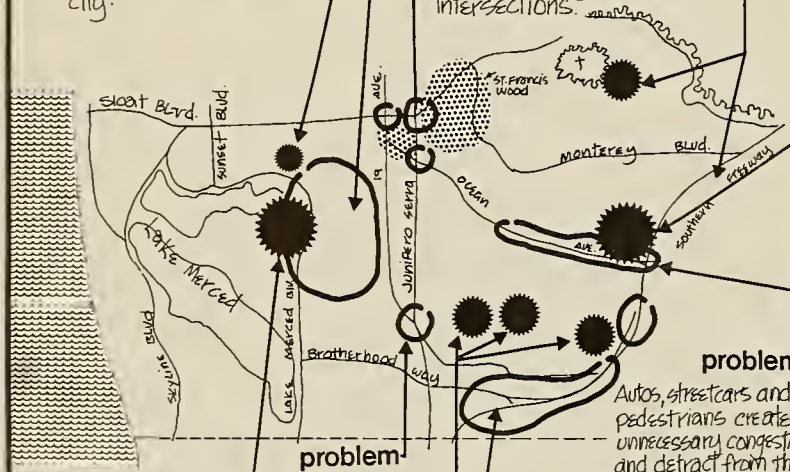
Parcels of land around Mt. Davidson and along southern freeway could be made into green-ways and neighborhood open spaces.

opportunity

school sites could be expanded into an educational park or unused portions traded for other sites in city.

problem

Traffic problems exist at these relatively undefined intersections.



problem

Autos, streetcars and pedestrians create unnecessary congestion and detract from the streets shopping character.

problem

Poorly defined intersection.

opportunity

Stonestown and the university are expanding and could, in the process be linked with public walkways. Harding Park might be developed into a common meeting ground between the diverse uses in the area.

problem

Sections paralleling the freeway corridor generally have a low quality environment with confusing, un-ordered forms and spaces.

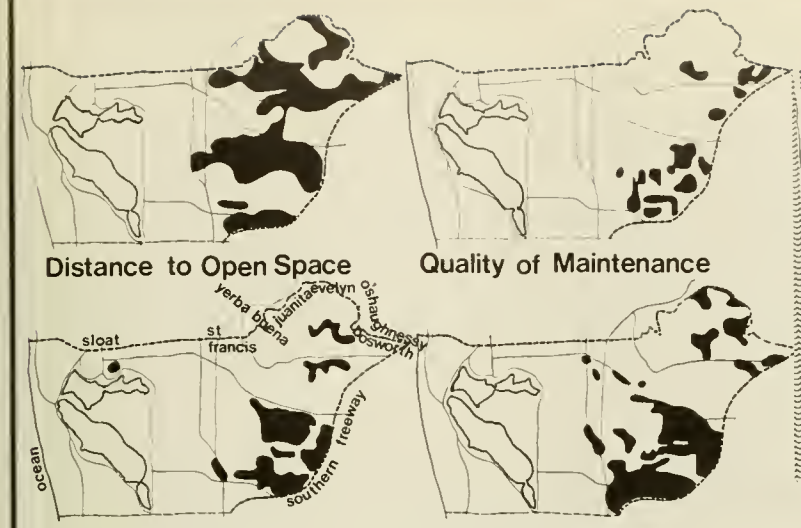
opportunity

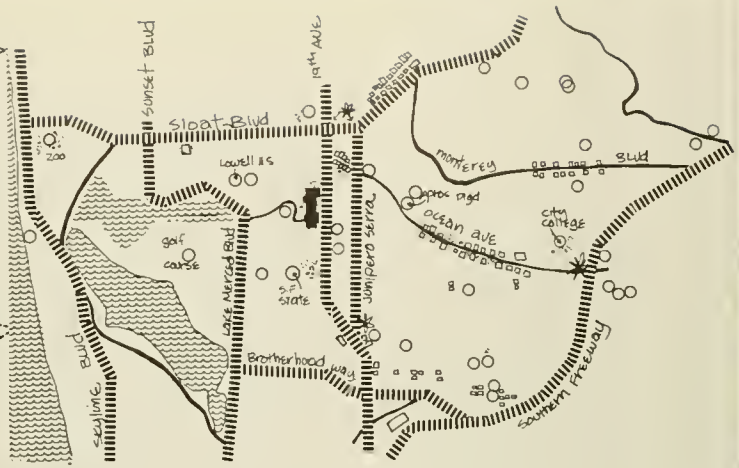
These small hilltops could support an imaginative mixture of residences and open space, or be planted with a thick green cover.

preliminary INTERPRETATION: PROBLEMS OPPORTUNITIES

AREAS FOR PRESERVATION
MAJOR OPPORTUNITY
MAJOR PROBLEM

INGLESIDE PLANNING AREA





QUALITY OF ENVIRONMENT

(GENERALIZED)
BELOW AVERAGE & LOW RATED AREAS

ACTIVITY-MOVEMENT PATTERNS

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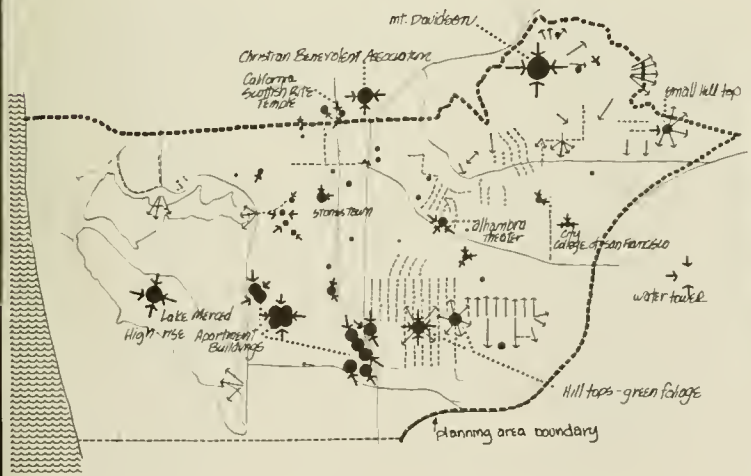

FOCAL POINTS LANDMARKS VIEWS

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INGLESIDE

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GENERALIZED COVERAGE MAP

The four surveys in this report focused on environmental quality and specific three-dimensional features. The generalized coverage map presents more abstract data: the amount of land within typical blocks (excluding the streets) covered by buildings.

A comparison with the permitted land coverage presented in Report No. 2 reveals many dramatic contrasts. On the whole, the City allows much higher coverage than actually occurs. For most of the western and southern halves of the City, 60-65% coverage is permitted in residential lands. Actual coverage seldom exceeds 50%, falling within the 31 to 50% range.

One hundred percent coverage is allowed along the entire eastern waterfront. In only one place on the Bay, the area around the Bethlehem Shipyards, does actual land coverage exceed 50%. The highest coverage (76 to 100%) occurs in and around Downtown and in two fingers, one extending south along Mission Street. A small area in the Marina also falls in this category. Surrounding this high density core is the next most intensively developed area of 51 to 75% land coverage. Together these two categories cover almost the entire northeast quadrant of the City.

Coverage in residential areas is an indicator of the amount of private open space available to residents. The most extensive areas rated as deficient in public open space in the Quality of Environment Survey ironically are the same areas with the least amount of available private open space. High population densities in these areas mean such small amounts of private space as exists must be shared by more people than in other parts of the City.

Appearances can be misleading. A surprising amount of industrial land that looked to have higher coverage because of the large, bulky massive form fell in the same category as covers most of the Sunset. A factor that aids this illusion is that building coverage does not regulate the amount of green open space. Industry typically paves or otherwise uses almost all its land for storage or other industrial uses. The environmental or visual effect is somewhat the same as 100% building coverage.

If improved public access to the bayshore for recreational purposes is to become City policy, then permitting 100% coverage in this area may not be a wise policy. Observations indicate, however, that coverage alone may not be the controlling factor. A requirement for a minimum area in landscaped open space might be much more effective. Better yet, a coverage "bonus" in waterfront and other industrial areas in return for small public open

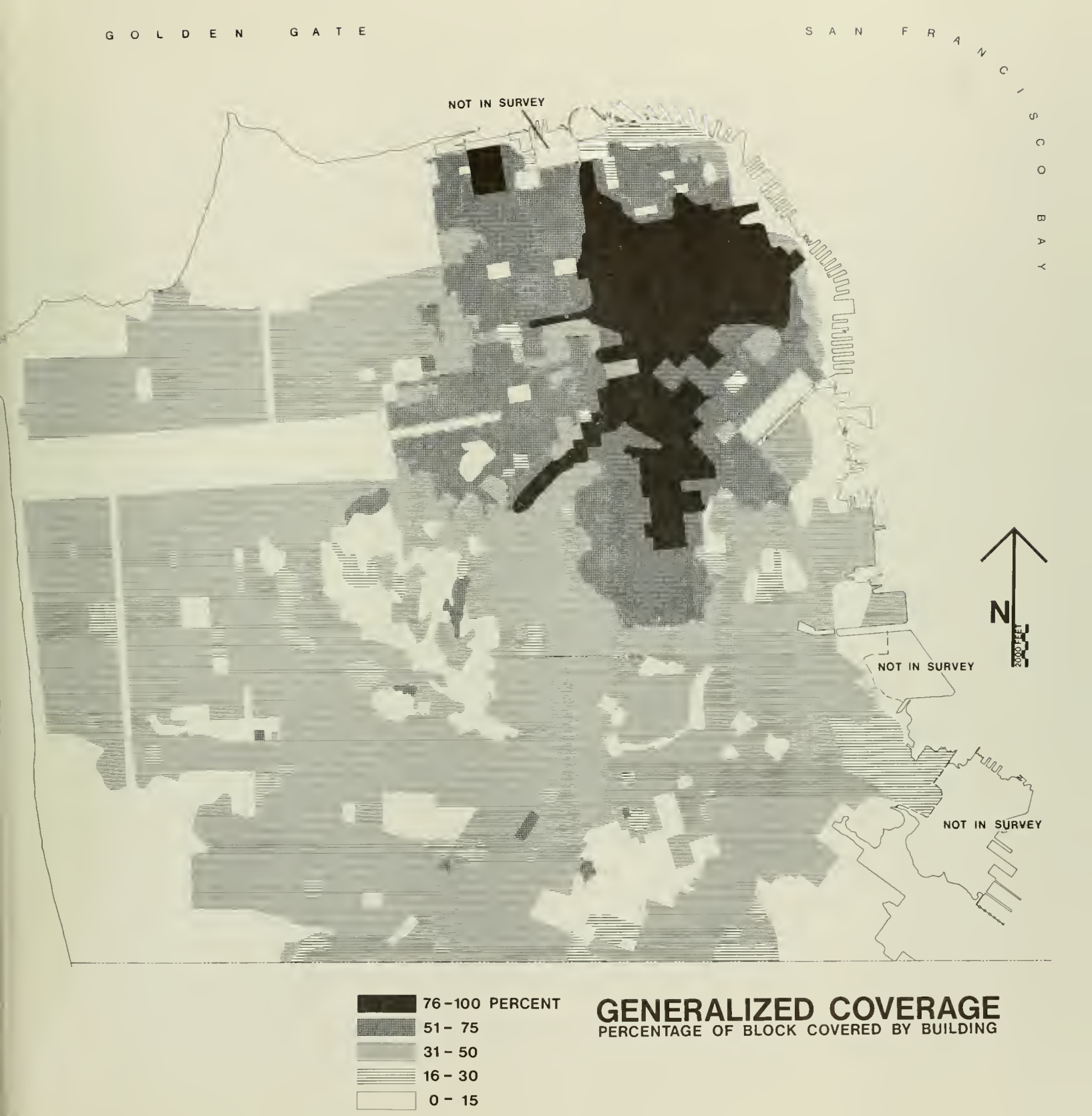
spaces in desirable locations might achieve public objectives while allowing the developer considerable flexibility.

Given that actual coverage is generally less than permissible, it appears evident that large-scale review of present controls is not an urgent matter. Their continuing desirability should, however, be carefully monitored where development preseure is accelerating and/or where new building patterns are increasing in land coverage or otherwise reducing usable open space.

METHOD

The Generalized Coverage Map is based upon a sample of 450 blocks. The City was first visually divided into areas of similar-appearing development patterns based on observation of aerial photographs. Two or more typical blocks were selected from each pattern area. Percent land coverage by buildings was then calculated and arranged in sequence from the lowest to highest percentage. The natural breaks and clusters of the percentages became the basis for the ranges to be mapped.

The resulting map thus presents a generalized picture. Block by block, it is more accurate for uniformly developed areas than where development varied widely.


GOLDEN GATE
SAN FRANCISCO BAY
NOT IN SURVEY
NOT IN SURVEY
NOT IN SURVEY
N
2000 FEET
76-100 PERCENT
51- 75
31- 50
16- 30
0- 15
GENERALIZED COVERAGE
PERCENTAGE OF BLOCK COVERED BY BUILDING

THE ROAD ENVIRONMENT SURVEY

BACKGROUND: The highway system of San Francisco is a principal means by which people get to know and understand the city. It is the city's public environment. About 180,000 vehicles pass along the James Lick Freeway every day, and 30,000 to 40,000 vehicles travel along many main arterial streets daily. The quality of this system is therefore important to the quality of San Francisco's environment.

The highway system will also be the locus of many future plans and proposed changes. Since San Francisco voted against overground freeways, pressures to widen existing streets will grow. Realignments, new routings, upgrading of existing streets, and urban development along the main system are all possible. Furthermore, there are indications that the next phase of Federal funding to highways may allocate considerable sums of money to the rehabilitation and improvement of the existing highway systems in urban areas.

PURPOSES OF STUDY: The intentions of this study of San Francisco's road environment are:

1. to assemble an environmental inventory and evaluation of the city's arterial street and freeway system, as a reference source for future decision-making.

2. to locate immediate problem areas on the system and recommend methods of eliminating or ameliorating these problems.

3. to identify areas of high environmental quality, which should be preserved and which can serve as examples of a good highway environment.

4. to act as a two-way educational device. The report offers for public discussion a number of criteria for evaluating the road environment and an interpretation of the public's values.

5. The ultimate purpose of this survey will be to develop policies and guidelines for the improvement of the city's road environment.

It was the original intention of the surveys, also, to examine the environmental quality of the public transit system. Inasmuch as most of the major arteries are also transit routes, this report will cover much of that environment.

THE FLOW SYSTEM: The routes selected for this study are limited to those most intensively used, the freeways and all arterial streets with 24-hour volumes of approximately 10,000 vehicles and over, as well as certain routes designated in the City Planning Department's preliminary traffic-ways plan, as potentially high-volume streets. The latter include Bay and Northpoint, Guerrero and Valencia, South Van Ness and Folsom and Alemany.

The flow system, like that of any major city, is principally radial, focussed on downtown and spread over many entering streets in the grid-iron system, particularly on the western and southern approaches.

MAJOR DESTINATIONS

Since the main purpose of a system is to move from one point to another, the location of major destinations, their accessibility and visibility is an important test of system success. The most important types of destination are governmental, financial, commercial, entertainment, cultural and recreational, institutional, industry and transportation terminals. In evaluating orientation on the highway system a distinction has been made between regular-use destinations and irregular-use destinations. The former, if they are destinations of commuters, do not create such orientation problems as do the irregular-use facilities which tourists, visitors and others have to search for, often for the first time. Regular-use destinations such as the financial district, industrial areas, institutions of various kinds and governmental offices have therefore been distinguished from the predominantly visitor destinations, such as commercial, cultural, entertainment and recreation centers. Some regular-use destinations such as the downtown shopping district, City Hall, and other publicly-oriented facilities, belong to both groups.

Another important question is the relation between different population groups and destinations. Some facilities are almost exclusively used by one class of person. A limited survey of the use patterns of different groups showed that only small proportions of those living in the southern part of the city use Golden Gate Park, the North Waterfront and the Ocean Beach. Better north-south access and visibility on the road system might improve these conditions were such use considered desirable.

THE FORM OF DESTINATIONS: If the most important destinations in San Francisco were housed in the most distinct and visible buildings and districts, the city would be very much easier to orient in, and facilities would have more appropriate levels of exposure to the public. This will be explained further under the description of "Orientation to Destinations".

The MAJOR CITYWIDE DESTINATIONS MAP describes how distinct each destination is from its surroundings, and how visible it is from the highway system. The level of public visibility is a product of several factors: (a) the prominence of the destination in each view of it, (b) its closeness to the axis of vision, (c) its distance from the observer, (d) the number of times it is seen from each point on the road, and (e) the number of roads from which it is seen. In some cases a destination is only distinct from one direction. On the map, approximate measures of identifiability have been made on the basis of visibility distance. A destination is only considered visible from a distance if it

stands out from all other distant elements and is viewed easily from more than one location on the road system. Similar rules apply to locally visible destinations; those that are only recognized on arrival cannot be identified beyond their own boundaries. The roads from which some main destinations are seen can be found on the ROADWAY INFORMATION MAP.

Many mis-matches can be found between the use and importance of destinations and their visible form. Fisherman's Wharf is low in distinctness and invisible and therefore unseen. But the downtown shopping district, though highly visible, happens to be indistinct and is still unseen. U.C. Medical Center is highly distinct in the local scene but invisible from the road system because there are no road views in that direction.

While the financial district, City Hall and Nob Hill are well seen from the system, the downtown shopping district, the North Waterfront, the U.C. Medical Center are not. When the Hamms' Beer sign or the Union 76 clock tower gets more exposure than City College or U.C. Medical Center, something is amiss. In general, private commercial and business facilities dominate the city's form, while public facilities remain hidden. One exception is City Hall, but the infusion of billboards along the freeway and high buildings in its vicinity suggest that this famous landmark will soon be obscured.

Due to poor visibility and access, some destinations may or may not be used at their desirable levels of intensity. The Palace of the Legion of Honor, for instance, probably loses potential visitors because of its remote and hidden location, as do many of the institutions and recreational facilities on the Ocean side of the city. A conscious effort to increase their exposure might be adopted as a design policy.

Were the form and exposure of each new building to conform to its assessed level of public use and importance,many private buildings would be subject to constraints and many public buildings would have to be more distinctive. This suggests a shifting in urban form priorities from those occuring in the city's form at present. One of San Francisco's major form problems is the continuous demand by the developers and the designers of new buildings to make them different from all previous ones. The Bank of America Building, the Trans-America Building and the proposed U.S. Steel Building each try to be outstanding either by their unique form or their high visibility. Differentiated buildings help citizen orientation but there appears to be no public reason why any particular private building should be more noticeable than any other.

GOLDEN GATE

SAN FRANCISCO BAY

GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE

MARINA

FISHERMAN'S WHARF

PALACE OF FINE ARTS

LOMBARD STREET

COIT TOWER

BAY BRIDGE

LETTERMAN HOSPITAL

UNION STREET

BROADWAY

CHINATOWN

NOB HILL

TRANSPORTATION TERMINAL

JAPANESE CULTURAL CENTER

PINE

BUSH

VAN NESS AVE.

DOWNTOWN

PALACE OF THE LEGION OF HONOR

GEARY STREET

ST. MARY'S CATHEDRAL

MARKET

CIVIC CENTER

TURK

SAN FRANCISCO COLLEGE FOR WOMEN

UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

PLAYLAND

FULTON

FELL

OAK

KEZAR STADIUM

GOLDEN GATE PARK

LINCOLN

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA MEDICAL CENTER

GUERRERO

MISSION STREET

MISSION DOLORES

SAN FRANCISCO GENERAL HOSPITAL

FOLSOM

TWIN PEAKS

ARMY

ARMY STREET TERMINAL

OCEAN BEACH

SUNSET

19th

SAN FRANCISCO PRODUCE MARKET

FARMERS' MARKET

STERN GROVE

SLOAT

DOLEISHHACKER ZOO

CITY COLLEGE OF SAN FRANCISCO

SAN FRANSISCO BAY NAVAL SHIPYARD

HARDING PARK

STONESTOWN

OCEAN

McLAREN PARK

THIRD

LAKE MERCED

SAN FRANCISCO STATE COLLEGE

MISSION

CANDLESTICK PARK

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

SAN MATEO COUNTY

COW PALACE

N

2000 FEET

MAJOR CITYWIDE DESTINATIONS

CHARACTER OF USES AND VISIBILITY FROM THE ROADWAY SYSTEM

VISIBILITY

DISTANTLY VISIBLE

LOCALLY VISIBLE

LOCALLY INVISIBLE (except on arrival) (no outline)

DISTINCTIVE FORM (GENERALLY HIGH)

POTENTIAL DESTINATION

USES

IRREGULAR USES

COMMERCE, SHOPPING

ENTERTAINMENT, CULTURE, CONVENTION

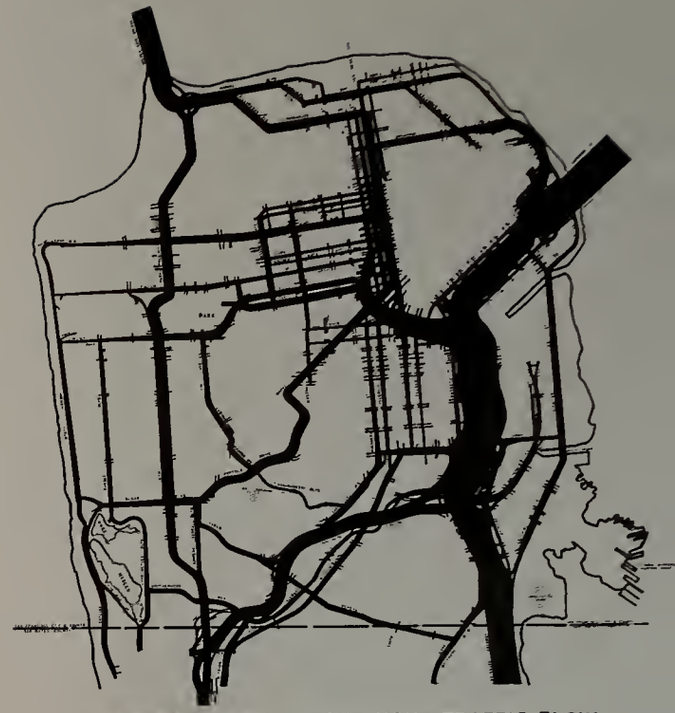
RECREATION

REGULAR USES

OFFICE/FINANCE, DOWNTOWN SHOPPING

GOVERNMENT, INSTITUTION

INDUSTRY, TRANSPORTATION



1966-68 TWENTY-FOUR HOUR TRAFFIC FLOW

LAND USES ON THE ROADWAY SYSTEM

RESIDENTIAL
COMMERCIAL
INDUSTRIAL
OPEN SPACE

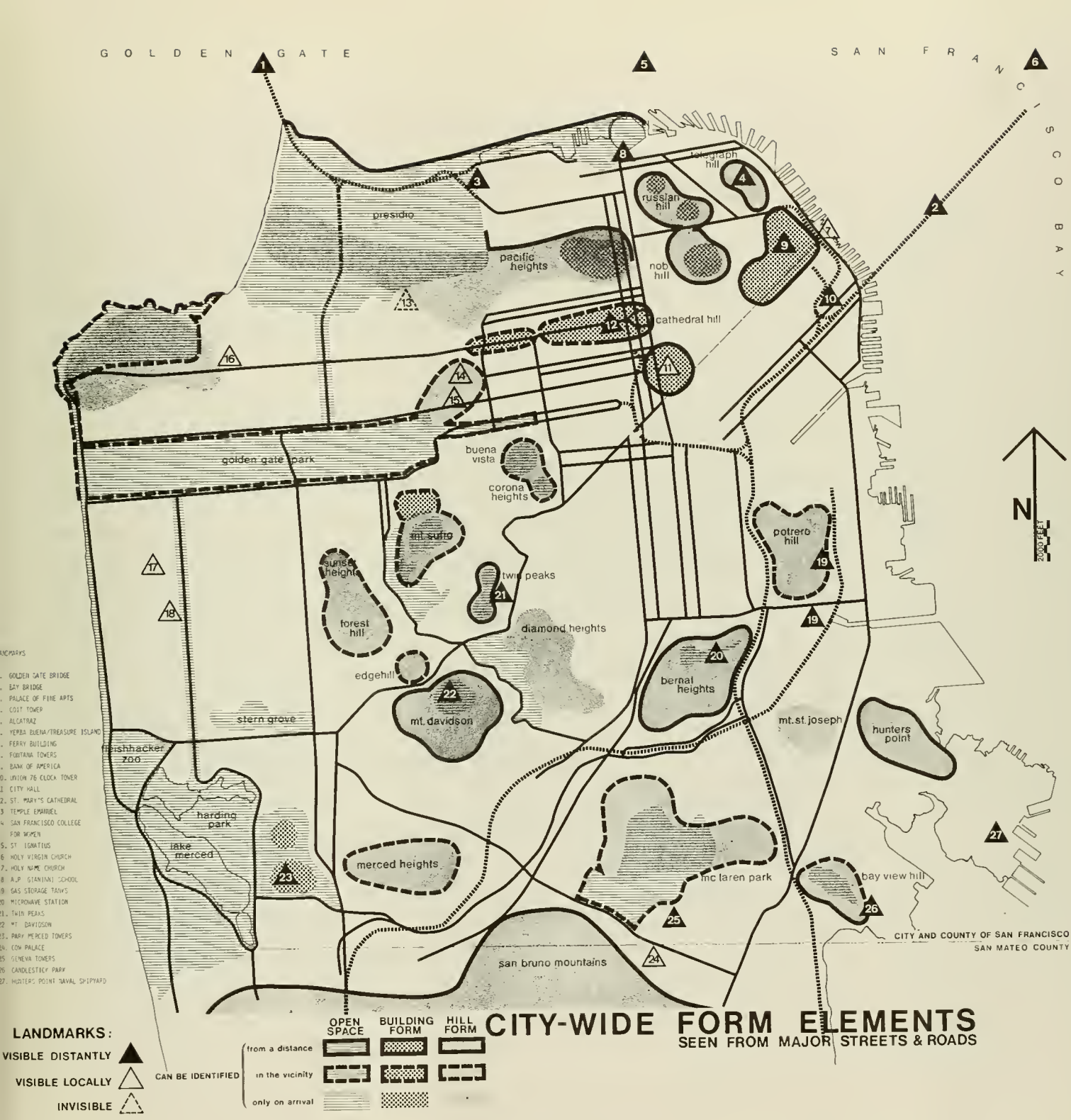
FREEWAY ELEVATED
FREEWAY ON GRADE
MAJOR THOROUGHFARE

FORM ELEMENTS

There are several parts of San Francisco besides its major destinations that are distinctive in their form and visible to large numbers of people. These elements are individual landmarks like Coit Tower, Twin Peaks, Mount Davidson, or the Union 76 clock tower; whole districts such as Nob and Russian Hills, the Golden Gate Park, and expansive areas like the Bay itself to the north and to the east; and linear elements such as shoreline edges and the north-south ridge of hills that divide the city. In some cases, the road system itself, particularly the freeway system, defines the form of an area.

These elements are the basic ingredients of San Francisco's distinctive environment. They too should be evident as the public moves around its city. They can serve as orientational anchor points and as reminders that people live in a special place. The roads that expose no such features are often dull and placeless.

In the FORM ELEMENTS MAP, as with MAJOR CITYWIDE DESTINATIONS, three levels of identifiability have been determined: (a) distant, (b) local, and (c) those which are only recognizable on arrival. Many distinctive form elements are hidden from the main circulation system. Lake Merced, for instance, is relatively unseen; so are Mt. Sutro, McLaren Park and the Presidio. Much of the shoreline, especially that along the Bay to the east and in the northwest, are seldom seen from the city's road system.



CITY-WIDE FORM ELEMENTS

SEEN FROM MAJOR STREETS & ROADS

FIELD SURVEY METHODS: The field surveys of the road system environment were carried out by two observers; one operated a continously running 16mm movie camera at a rate of two frames per second, and simultaneously took black and white photographs at frequent intervals; the other drove the car and tape recorded his general assessments of environmental characteristics.

The movies, tape recordings and photographs were used to make the final assessments of road environmental quality. The photographs have been collected in several volumes as a permanent storage of information about the city's highway environment, to be updated as new physical changes take place.

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE ROAD ENVIRONMENT: The drawings describe three different aspects of that environment:

a. its <u>character</u>, the elements and aspects that are seen by the observers;

b. the <u>identity and structure</u> of the various parts of the system;

c. and a record of city information conveyed to the observers who used the system.

ROADWAY CHARACTER

The diagram shows the character of the system from the viewpoint of the field observers, together with some general comments about problems, assets and opportunities. Many of the more detailed characteristics of movement patterns and traffic cannot be shown here but most of the other aspects of environmental character are recorded. A systematic basis for evaluating the quality of the road environment will be described in the section on Evaluation.

When people travel along highways, surveys have established that the characteristics to which they attend most frequently include the following:

a. their own system of movement and decisions,
b. the evident activity of other traffic, parked cars and pedestrians,
c. the form of the channel itself (retaining walls, embankments, bridges and tunnels,)
d. the form of the surrounding space and buildings,
e. the various views that are gained from the road,
f. the presence of trees and landscaping,
g. signs, wires and other kinds of street furniture.

The traveller on the system will attend to any of these features depending on his personal background, the task at hand, and the configuration of the environment. The drawings describe therefore the potential environment of the road traveller.

This map, which describes only a selected number of highways out of the overall system which was studied, inventories the elements of the road environment and comments on positive and negative factors of maintenance and quality, sections of constriction or spaciousness, and points of interest or clutter. These evaluations are summarized on the Rating and Criteria Descriptive Maps.

Undescribed are the more ephemeral qualities of the city's road environment. Among these, the presence of traffic on certain streets during rush hour affects the apparent spaciousness of the channel, the frequent occurrence of fog over the western part of the city eliminates many views and at night time the lighting pattern changes the character of routes and the landmarks which are seen.


street terminates in parking lot & clutter of overhead wires
chain-link fences
trees generally continuous but too small
street appears to dead-end
scattered commercial
carnival-like clutter of signs, billboards & commercial uses
excessive hills & vegetation prominent -- presidio buildings obscure
wide street with landscaped median
"tunnel" of lower deck exciting but dangerous with many alignment changes
major green space of roadway system
expressway treatment -- road & uses could be separated more
congestion & heavy cross-traffic
neighborhood commercial diagonal parking pedestrian/auto conflicts through traffic conflicts
clutter of many building types & scattered commercial
confusing angle intersections & too much space in road
natural landscape but haphazard dirt parking lots
excessively wide angle intersection
dull & excessively wide
abrupt change of character of "parkway"
clutter of rooftops & billboards interfere with panoramic views
playland & park look desolate -- street is parking lot
"safeway plaza" poorly organized elements -- same landscaping
park entrance & commercial uses -- congestion
kezar stadium hidden -- only light towers visible
northbound -- sudden exciting panoramic view of downtown area
residential street lined with small trees
well landscaped tunnel-like road
wide street -- little landscaping -- bleak
open, panoramic views continuous
most views of ocean hidden by sand dunes -- road spacious but dull
barren hillside, only scrub vegetation
clutter of commercial structures
high trees of stern grove
pleasant road -- well landscaped -- residential
constant lane changes required to stay on san jose southbound
interchange area generally well landscaped
g.e.t. commercial
excessively wide, inadequately landscaped
stonestown -- low buildings -- little landscaping -- many parked cars
unsightly streetcar tracks & wires in median
clutter of buildings & billboards in view
"hard" steel & concrete surfaces dominate with little relief in views or vegetation
san francisco state college -- not even the sign is visually prominent
temporary clutter of construction
bleak environment near roadway
minimal landscaping -- views distant road tends to be dull
ramps, tunnels, overpasses, merging, exiting, many choices of route, curving roads
ROADWAY CHARACTER
ELEVATED ROADWAY
VIEWS
high-rise buildings
hill
land-mark
water
EMBANKMENT
LANDMARKS
local
citywide
TREES AND LANDSCAPING
low
high
UNDEFINED/OPEN EDGE OF ROADWAY
OVERPASS
BUILDING EDGE
low
high
RETAINING WALLS
CLUTTER: SIGNS, WIRES, PARKED CARS, ETC.

ROADWAY IDENTITY AND STRUCTURE

The parts of the system which have distinct identity, and those that are well related to each other, form structured journeys. These are described on this map which is concerned with the orientational clarity of each route.

Since there are essentially three ways of orienting on a highway -- (a.) by the distinctness and relationships between the character of different parts of the system, (b.) through the continuity of routes and, (c.) through definite clues as to the direction of travel -- each of these qualities is described.

A section of road or an intersection has clear identity if it is:

1. coherent within itself, i.e., certain predominant characteristics such as trees, houses or even industrial buildings occur repeatedly throughout that section of the route,
2. if it is distinct from neighboring sections of the route, i.e., if it has trees but the adjacent sections do not, or if it is characterized only by a long view of some particular part of the city, or,
3. if it is unique in the system as a whole, i.e., the Marina with its shoreline view of Marin County and the Bay, or Van Ness Avenue with its automobile showrooms.

The most distinctive parts of the system are generally those which are connected by strong topographical features, the roads which travel over the hills or along the shoreline. Others are those tree-lined avenues and streets through the Presidio and the Golden Gate Park, and the more intensive commercial streets like Lombard. Many major and minor landmarks also assist in identifying parts of the system. Some which are presently hidden but which could be exposed have been noted.

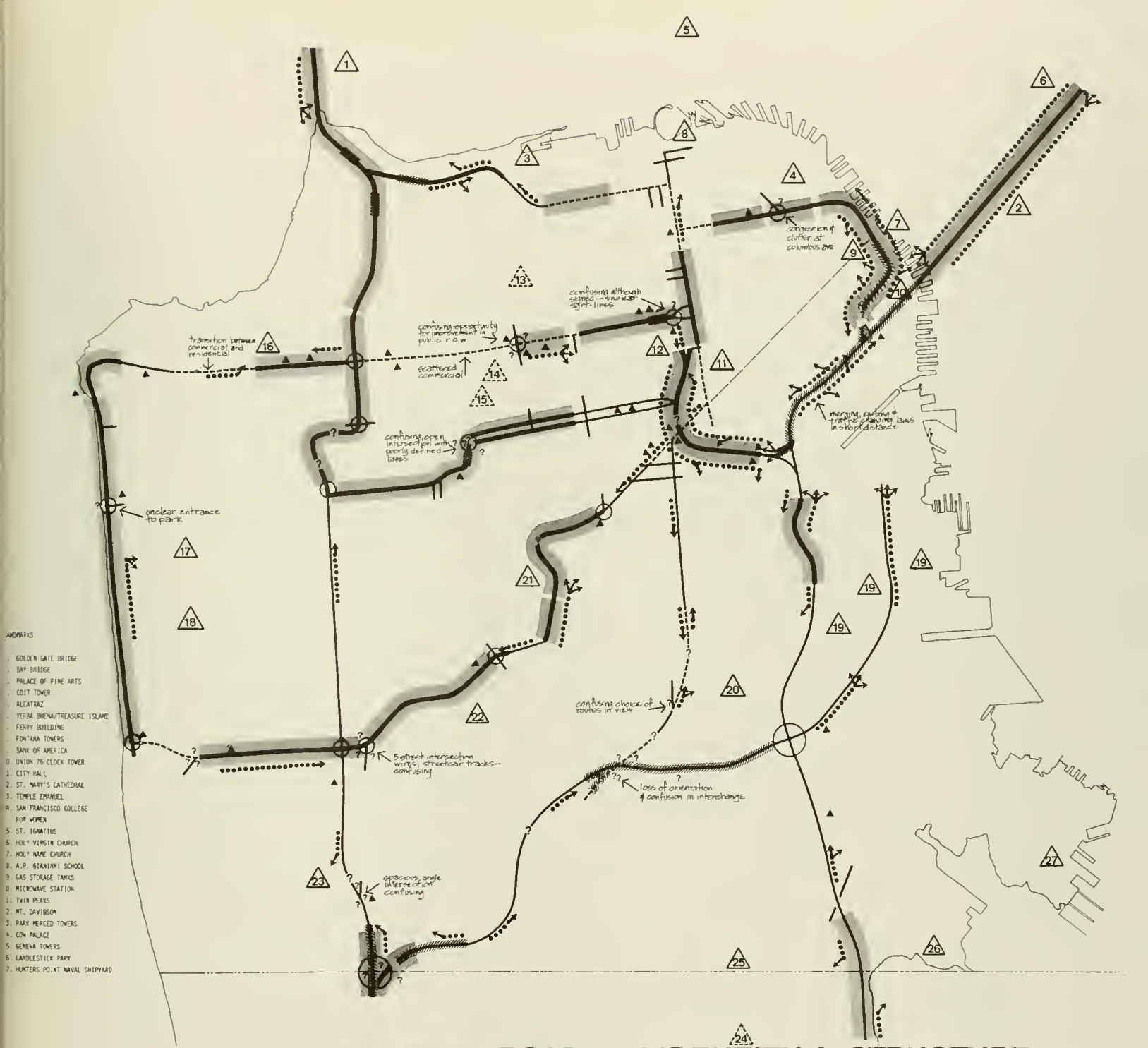
Poor continuity is a problem at intersections throughout the system, although a route may be distinct as a whole. The on and off-ramps to the freeways are also difficult parts. Arterial routes such as San Jose Avenue, which travel under or around freeways frequently lose continuity. Streets which have views of landmarks ahead, whatever the landmark, maintain for the traveller a level of continuity and forward impetus.

Intersections are also points where a traveller can lose a sense of direction. Curving alignments, if in fog or without views, will also confound the traveller.

On most parts of the city's highway system the traveller knows whether he is generally travelling north, south, east or west. Only in the southern part of the city are there many routes whose ambiguity is disturbing.

Some parts of the system are problem areas because there are too many decisions to make at one time. The freeways are the worst offenders in this respect, since they give no chance for the driver to slow down. Ways of simplifying the environment of the Bay Bridge entry and parts of the Southern Freeway are still needed.

A summary of these assessments is evaluated in the description of Route Clarity.



ROADWAY IDENTITY & STRUCTURE

ROADWAY INFORMATION

This map describes the general information that a traveller is likely to pick up on his journeys along the roadways of San Francisco. There are essentially two ways in which he can do this -- through views of destinations or by signing.

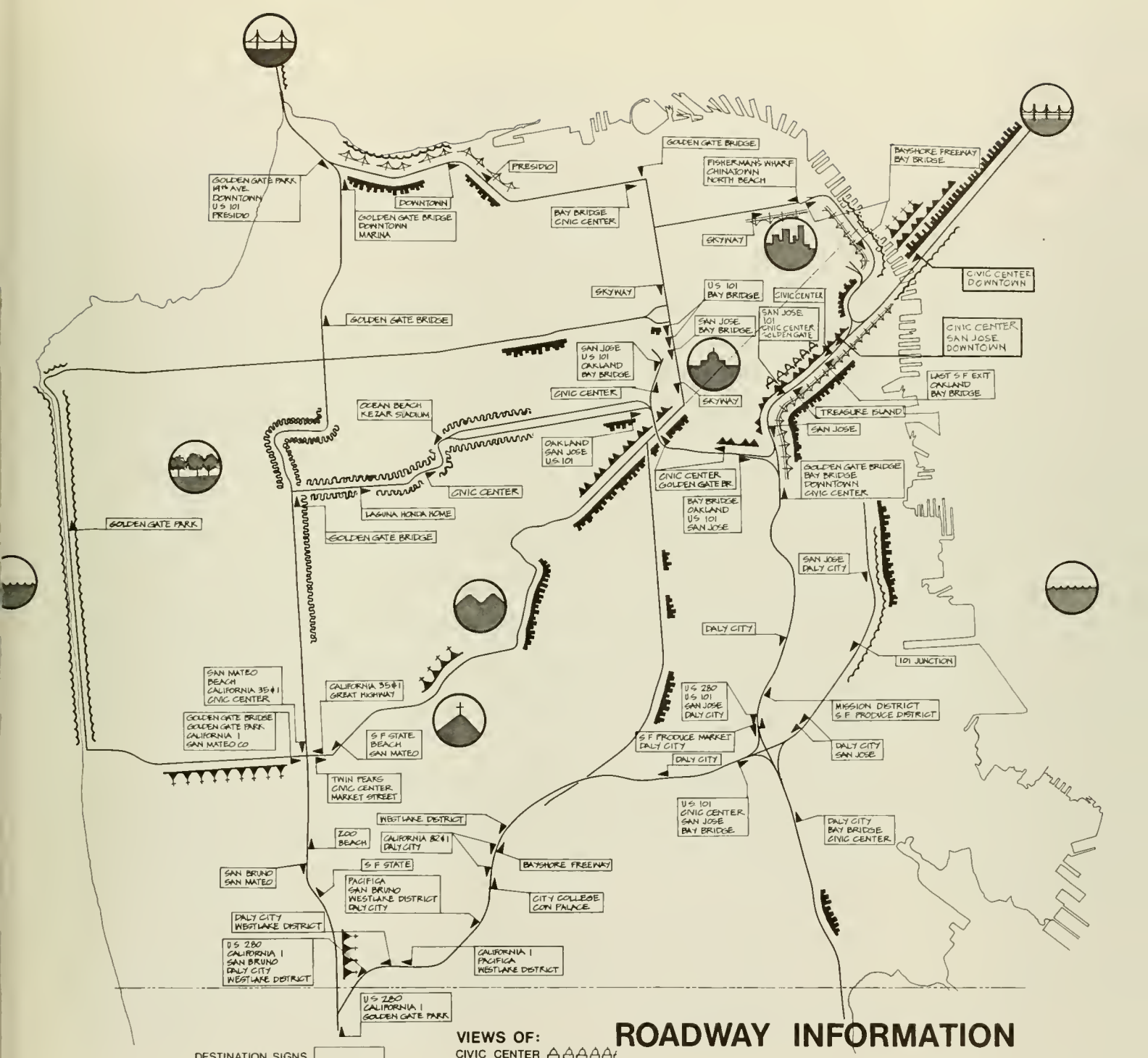
From the diagram it is evident that although San Francisco's form is well seen across the Bay from the east and from the north, its major destinations are not visible at many points on the city's road system. Downtown can be seen on the James Lick Freeway, from upper Market Street and from the Golden Gate approach but while travelling in the city little is seen of the downtown area, except on the axis of some approach roads. In the western part of the city, the Golden Gate Park, Lake Merced, Stonestown and other focal points are seldom if ever seen from a distance.

The hilltops such as Twin Peaks and Mount Davidson consequently become important reference points. The bridges are also important orienting features, particularly the towers of the Golden Gate Bridge which can be seen from many surprising places.

As for signing on the system, those on the freeways are generally straightforward except in the downtown stretches where the confusion of the Central Freeway leg and the elusive connections with the Embarcadero Freeway appear to have confounded the sign writers. The designations in these parts are just not distinct enough from each other, and their dependence on road numbers (e.g. U.S. 101) further complicates the choices for the irregular traveller.

The main districts of the Center City; Downtown, Civic Center, Nob Hill, North Beach, Chinatown, Fisherman's Wharf, should probably find a place on the freeway signs. Many of them do, but in a sporadic fashion. Destinations like the bridges and the Bayshore Freeway could be represented in a distinct lettering or coloring. Graphic symbols depicting the bridges and main districts could also be introduced. A unique city like San Francisco should have a very distinctive set of signs on its freeways, rather than the nationally standardized "no-place" signs that it presently has.

Signs on the arterial street system are very sparse with the possible exception of 19th Avenue. Important institutions like San Francisco State College or U.C. Medical Center are therefore extremely difficult to find for the first-time traveller. A more thorough examination of the city's sign system is recommended.



ROADWAY INFORMATION

EVALUATION OF THE ROAD ENVIRONMENT

An attempt will now be made to evaluate the system environment on the basis of several criteria. These criteria--maintenance, spaciousness, order, monotony, route clarity, orientation to destinations, safety and ease of movement, and livability--have been derived from the direct experience of the road surveys and from other studies in which road travellers have been interviewed and asked to give the basis of their preferences.

These evaluations are each rated on a five-part scale. No summary map evaluating the system has been made, since it would divert attention from the specific types of problem identified, and because travellers and readers are, in any case, likely to weigh the criteria differently.

The evaluation of the livability of the street system has not been mapped since it awaits the findings of an interview survey of street livability.

The methods used to record and evaluate the quality of the roadway are included in an Appendix to this section of report entitled Notes on Methodology.

Preceding each graphic plate is a brief discussion defining the physical features and roadway characteristics evaluated and their policy implications. Opposite each plate the roadways in the photographs are identified and their salient features noted.

MAINTENANCE

DEFINITION: The quality of the road environment defined here includes the quality of materials and the amount of design care as well as its actual cleanliness and maintenance. It relates to the amount of investment that has been expended on the environment, whether it is in good or bad "taste".

Three aspects of quality are described on the rating charts, that of the road surface itself, that of the bordering environment and that of the larger environment. The quality of the road environment may be valued highly by middle-class travellers and tourists. Those who commute and who are less affluent are probably more concerned with the quality and maintenance of the pavement and channel itself since they have to travel it every day.

COMMENT: Most of the low scores occur in industrial or commercial strip areas where the surrounding land uses are disjointed and property is often left uncared for. Other areas are in poorer residential districts where residences are often mixed with commerce. The well-maintained parts are either

the freeways or in the middle and upper class residential districts in the north and west of the city.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

1. Many of the poorly maintained channels are under the jurisdiction of agencies who have control over only a portion of the system. Better coordination with the Department of Public Works for upgrading of streets is needed.

2. Tracks in the roads are one of the most inhibiting maintenance features of the system. They should be given special attention.

3. The upgrading of commercial and industrial environments will be difficult since many enterprises in such areas are marginal. Public investment in and coordination of street furniture, sidewalks, signs, planting, walls and fencing may selectively improve such areas.

SPACIOUSNESS

DEFINITION: Spaciousness is valued by many travellers for safe and easy travelling. Open spaces along the route also allow for panoramic views from the roadway which assist in orientation. Finally, travel on a spacious highway of monumental scale can give the traveller a feeling of well-being and sense of grandeur. Taken to an extreme, however, spaciousness can be unpleasant. Roads that are too wide without any curb or enclosure allow no definition to the driver's line of movement and make travel more fatiguing.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

1. Street widening or the elimination of parking would be the solution to many of these problems.

2. In cases where the broader environment is closed in, ways of opening up occasional views, clearer signing to reduce uncertainty or the painting of walls and structures in lighter, brighter colors might alleviate oppressive situations.

3. Reduction in the speed and volume of traffic on some streets may be necessary.

4. Zoning to prevent continuous walls and to allow setbacks and views along constricted roads might have a long-term effect.

5. The narrowness of a street might cause traffic to slow down and thereby increase the safety and livability of a street. Some constricted streets should therefore be left as they are.

MAINTENANCE

The following photographs illustrate varying quality environments.
A Freeways are usually well-maintained, as are roads in middle and
B,C higher income areas as on Portola Drive and Franklin Streets.
Although the planting has not yet grown up in the larger environment
D about Brotherhood Way, and although such an environment might fail
on other counts, it is well-maintained and parklike in character.

As for the negative examples, the cracked and ill-maintained section
E of Pine Street actually occur in a moderately well-maintained area.
F Many of the commercial enterprises on Northpoint Street are new,
yet the road is in very poor condition and curbs are nonexistant. In
G,H the illustrations taken from The Embarcadero and Pine Street, the
larger environment of littered empty lots, railroad tracks, parking
lots, leaning telephone poles and industrial buildings is rough and
unfinished in character.

I This blank section of Turk Street exhibits little concern for
quality or maintenance in the overall environment.

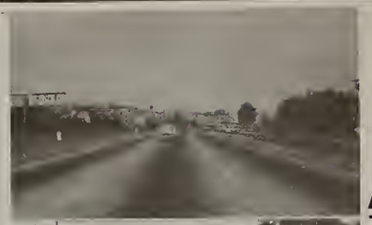
SPACIOUSNESS

A Sloat Boulevard with three wide lanes and an unfilled parking lane
is an adequately wide street for its traffic intensity outside rush
hour. Also the houses and vegetation do not obscure the view. The
B Marina Boulevard is spacious yet the traveller's line of movement
is stabilized by the line of buildings on the right-hand side. In
heavy traffic, its two traffic lanes and lack of median strip are
inadequate to permit any time for drivers to appreciate scenery other
than the road. Elevated freeways are satisfying because of their
C,D openness. These two illustrations, taken from the Southern Freeway,
afford panoramic views of residential hills, downtown towers and the
Bay Bridge. As the houses found along Marina Boulevard, here the
embankment stabilizes the traveller's line of movement and prevents
E a sense of over-spaciousness. The descent of upper Market Street
into the City is an instance of a spacious view from a narrow channel.
It is not an entirely satisfactory situation for the driver must
divide his attention between driving and appreciating the view. The
F Great Highway affords the flattest space situation in the City with
its low view of the ocean.

On the negative side, Bryant Street contains examples of some of the
more oppressive situations in the City, especially if the traveler's
speed is high. Like the channel effect found along Bryant, travelling
beneath a freeway is equally oppressive. Lack of direct sunlight in
H this example from The Embarcadero accentuates this feeling of oppres-
I sion. Entering the tunnel on Broadway can be a thrill for some people,
but disturbing for others. The feeling of constriction is compounded
by one of uncertainty about the future course of the road. Barriers
ahead and lack of a view can be an even more disconcerting experience,
J regardless of how well landscaped the environment is. Both Bayshore
K Boulevard at Army Street Circle, and Valencia Street at Market
illustrate this point.

ROAD ENVIRONMENT SURVEY: CRITERIA AND RATING DESCRIPTIONS

MAINTENANCE

quality +	Travelers prefer well-maintained, high-quality materials, and detailed design in the road environment. They like:	Many travelers dislike areas of neglect and poor maintenance as evidenced by:	− neglect
 A	channel CLEAN NEW ROADS, CURBS, WALLS, WELL-KEPT SIDEWALKS AND GENEROUS LANDSCAPING	channel UNEVEN, BROKEN AND UNSIGHTLY ROAD SURFACES, CURBS, MEDIAN STRIPS, AND CHAIN LINK FENCES	 E  F
 B  C	near environment NEW CUSTOM DESIGNED BUILDINGS OF QUALITY MATERIALS, CAREFULLY LANDSCAPED, SUGGESTING A HIGH SOCIAL STATUS	near environment DILAPIDATED BUILDINGS WITH PEELING PAINT, POOR MATERIALS, UNKEMPT VEGETATION, OR TRASH	 G  H
 D	overall environment WELL DESIGNED AND MAINTAINED GENERAL ENVIRONMENT QUALITY MATERIALS, AND THE ABSENCE OF GENERAL CLUTTER	overall environment JUNKYARDS, CARBAGE DUMPS, NEGLECTED LOTS (WEED-FILLED), UNSIGHTLY PARKING LOTS, USED CAR LOTS AND GENERAL CLUTTER IN THE ENVIRONMENT	 I

SPACIOUSNESS

spaciousness +	Many travelers prefer a spacious road environment with:	Many travelers dislike a feeling of constriction in the roadway caused by:	− constriction
 A  B	channel BROAD, GENEROUS, SOMETIMES MONUMENTAL ROAD CHANNELS, TRAVEL LANES, RIGHTS OF WAY	channel NARROW ROAD CHANNELS WITH BUILDINGS OR HIGH WALLS SET CLOSE TO THE ROAD	 G
 C  D	near environment SETBACK OF BUILDINGS AND ELEVATED FREEWAYS WITH EXPANSIVE VIEWS	near environment OVERHEAD BRIDGES, TUNNELS, DEPRESSED CUTS, FREEWAY INTERCHANGES, OR LOWER DECKS OF ELEVATED FREEWAYS	 H  I
 E  F	overall environment WIDE OR PANORAMIC VIEWS AHEAD ON THE ROADWAY	overall environment LACK OF VIEWS, AND VISUAL BARRIERS ON THE ROAD AHEAD	 J  K

ORDER

DEFINITION: An orderly environment helps to reduce excessive strains of travel. It simplifies decision-making, facilitates easy movement and identification, is restful to the eye and gives the traveller time to appreciate the quality of his surroundings. Complicated, cluttered environments are fatiguing, distracting, and, in extreme cases, unsafe.

Orderly sequences such as gradients, rhythms or regularities of character on a route can create more coherent journeys. If there are no consistencies, journeys will be disrupted and disoriented. If an environment is excessively ordered, it can become monotonous and even authoritarian. Such streets have been rated negative under the criterion of monotony.

Three kinds of order have been outlined on the rating table: the first relating to the channel itself, the second to the immediate environment, and the third to wider views and sequences.

COMMENT: Disordered situations occur where traffic and parking problems are severe and where they are aggravated by the usual clutter of commercial and industrial development, especially around the downtown area.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

1. More attention to the problem of parking, and the simplification and separation of traffic movements might help this problem, but given high levels of traffic on the downtown approaches it is questionable how much can be done.

2. Efforts to simplify the surrounding environment might be more successful. The planting out of the more distracting areas, construction of low walls, the simplification of road surfaces, signs and street furniture can contribute to the reduction of disturbing attention-getters. It must be expected however, that the road environment will become more noisy and complicated as downtown is approached. In some ways this is a positive aspect.

MONOTONY

DEFINITION: Variation is a desirable characteristic so long as it lies within definable limits. It provides interest, which most travellers desire, since it is difficult to engage in other activities while travelling in a car. It also keeps travellers attentive, and probably encourages them to become more involved with the city environment. Variation is preferable at a scale where there are definite contrasts between lengths of the road and between major elements. Minor variations, from house to house, or between types of street furniture, create no more than a texture and can often be

annoying. Commuters who have to travel routes daily may be more concerned about variation and interest than occasional travellers.

Monotony may be characterized by the alignment of the road (straight roads are very likely to be monotonous); the spatial form of the environment; the height and character of buildings, vegetation and street furniture; the lack of distinctive elements such as landmarks, views, or individual block character. Monotony is often described by expressions such as "ordinary", "all the same", "nothing happening", "dull", "boring". Such travel can be fatiguing and can lead to inattention and drowsiness.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

1. Alignment and traffic movement changes can alleviate monotony, if they can be made. While it is difficult to change alignments, speeds on the more monotonous routes could be varied to more closely fit desirable safety levels, types of intersections or gradients.

2. The introduction of planting, lighting, new pavement or sidewalk surfaces at definite points on these routes could break the monotony, and increase local identity. The rehabilitation of commercial streets or the upgrading of major intersections might be pretexts for such differentiation.

3. The selective pruning and elimination of some existing vegetation, street furniture, and parking could also provide breaks in the uniformity of many streets.

COMMENT: San Francisco suffers less from monotony than cities on flat sites. Yet, there are many long avenues and streets in the western and southern parts of the city which are of uniform character. Even some of the longer tree-lined streets become fatiguing and oppressive.

ORDER

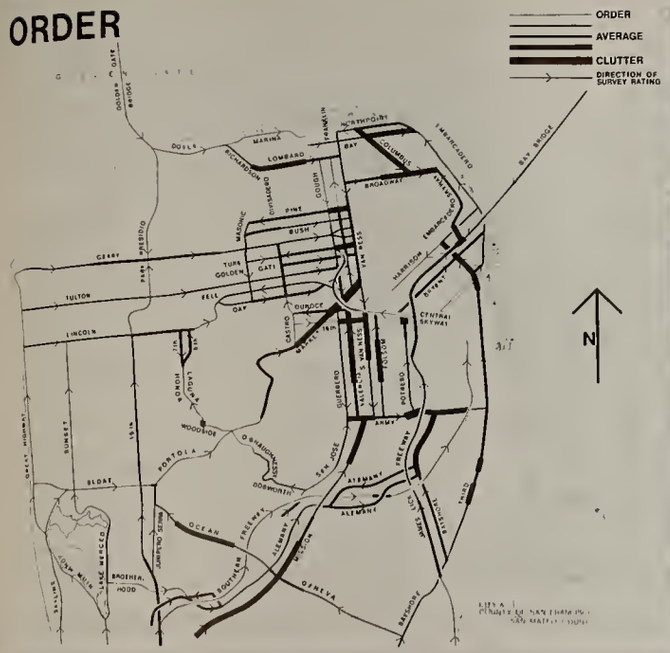
A Along Sunset Boulevard is a fine example of a simply designed bridge without any cluttered ornaments or details, well related to the surrounding park by
B trees. A section along John Muir Drive illustrates how a bend can be negotiated in an orderly way. The alignment is an easy one, and enclosure by an embankment to the left and the trees on the right keep the traveller's eyes directed on the road ahead. The near environment in the next photo is uniform with buildings of similar height, yet varied because of dissimilar
C designs. The curves along Portola Drive show this and illustrate how curves allow more variation in the driver's view presenting glimpses of houses
D ahead as well as at the side. Guerrero Street shows how a long view of a landmark such as the church spire can maintain environmental continuity
E over a length of road even if road character varies. A driver on Folsom Street, however, is made to approach an intersection with cars travelling in several directions, with buildings oriented in different ways, and with an elevated freeway structure dominating the middle ground. Next is an illustration of how complex movements can be confusing to the driver along
F Ocean Avenue. The next two photographs show how sequences along a route
G can be random. The first, along The Embarcadero, shows sporadic curb-cuts, cars parked in all kinds of places, irregularly placed poles and, in general, an uncoordinated inefficient environment. Travelling east on
H Market Street at Church Street, one sees how disruptive a roadway environment can be when composed of overhead wires, billboards, and shopping center signs.

MONOTONY

A The dramatic flying curve of the on-ramp to the Southern Freeway and the
B roller-coaster movement on San Jose Avenue under the Southern Freeway show how the elements of freeway design can be used to create exciting and powerfully contrasted experiences. Buena Vista Heights as seen from
C upper Market Street is an example of a roadway view which, during heavy
D traffic, is almost too intriguing. The view from Laguna Honda Boulevard
E is similarly interesting. Marina Boulevard, with its sailboats to the right and the long view of the Golden Gate Bridge, together with the varied Spanish style houses, is one of the most delightlul streets in the City. Its straight alignment allows even the driver to take in many
F features. Along Sloat Boulevard, the view contains a greater depth, with not only trees and a church tower in the foreground, but a major city landmark, Mount Davidson in the background. Such a view depends for its attractiveness on a set of large and differentiated elements uncluttered by small houses or too many items of street furniture. On
G the other hand, Third Street's length and uniform alignment provide neither drivers nor passengers with any alignment or speed changes.
H Long factory walls on Third Street are more a pedestrian's problem than
I a driver's. Movement through such a factory district is dull. Mission Street visually ends and the close walls lack interest at driving speeds.
J Finally, along Alemany Boulevard there is little enclosure and no strong contrast between houses or between houses and the road. Such a composition can be the most uninteresting environment of all.

ROAD ENVIRONMENT SURVEY: CRITERIA AND RATING DESCRIPTIONS

ORDER



order + | **— clutter**

Travelers prefer simple, well-organized trips so long as they are not too monotonous. They like:

Travelers do not like situations which are overwhelming, disrupted, cluttered or otherwise distracting:

A

channel·

ORDERLY SPATIAL SEQUENCES, CLEAR AND COMPLETE APPROACHES TO GOALS, WELL-ORGANIZED VIEWS AND A GOOD 'FIT' BETWEEN THE ROAD AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

B

C

near environment·

SIMPLE, DECISIVE CURVES, RAMPS AND GRADES, LOGICAL SEQUENCES AND RHYTHMS OF MOVEMENTS AND DECISIONS

D

overall environment·

AN ORGANIZED ENVIRONMENT WITH BUILDINGS OF RELATED SIZE, SCALE & USE, AND WELL-GROUPED SIGNS, TREES, LANDSCAPING, CARS, BILLBOARDS AND OTHER ELEMENTS

channel·

COMPLEXITY CAUSED BY TOO MANY TURNS, STOPS, HILLS OR OTHER ALIGNMENT CHANGES OR COMPLEX TRAFFIC MOVEMENTS

E

F

near environment·

EXCESSIVE SPATIAL CONFINEMENT, DISRUPTION OR CHANGE, CONFLICTING POORLY SEEN AND EMPTY VIEWS, JAGGED LEFTOVER SPACES AND OTHER MISFITS

G

overall environment·

CHAOTIC ENVIRONMENT OF CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY, CLUTTERED AND UNRELATED BUILDINGS, EMPTY LOTS, REAR FACADES, SIGNS, BILLBOARDS, OVERHEAD WIRES, POLES, PARKED CARS

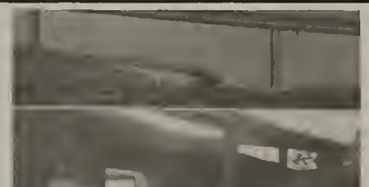
H

MONOTONY

variety + | **— monotony**

Travelers usually prefer variation within an optimal range. Many enjoy:

Travelers lose attention and become bored if the road environment is monotonous. Many dislike:



A

channel·

CURVING ROADWAY ALIGNMENTS, ROLLER-COASTER MOVEMENTS, DIFFERENTIATED SEQUENCES OF MOVEMENT AND DECISION

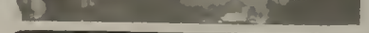
B

C

near environment·

VARIATIONS IN STRUCTURES, TREES AND LANDSCAPING, DRAMATIC CONTRASTS AND SEQUENCES OF SPACE, SHORT TUNNELS, OPEN SPACES, OR CHANGING VIEWS FROM LEFT TO RIGHT

D



E

overall environment·

VIEWS OF INTERESTING ACTIVITIES AND PLACES, OTHER TRANSPORTATION ROUTES, BOATS, DOCKS, INDUSTRY AND SKYLINES, SO LONG AS THERE IS TIME TO SEE THEM AND THEY ARE NOT OVERWHELMING

F

channel·

LONG STRAIGHT ROADS WITH NO VARIATION IN SPEED OR DECISION SPACING

G

near environment·

ROADS WITH UNIFORM SETBACKS OR WIDTH OF ROAD CHANNEL, CONTINUOUSLY OPEN SPACES, OR UNCHANGING VIEWS

H

I

overall environment·

LACK OF TREES OR OTHER LANDSCAPING, VIEWS OF ACTIVITY (SIGNS OF LIFE) UNIFORM STYLE, COLOR, TEXTURE OF BUILDINGS, PAVEMENT, STREET LIGHTING OR OTHER FURNITURE

J

ROUTE CLARITY

DEFINITION: Good orientation on the highway system is a measure of its efficiency. Also, if the parts are well-related, and journeys are coherent, a highway system may have aesthetic value. The tension between coherence and disruption, between unity and variety, is a fine one that only the best works of art manage to resolve. In the same way, orientation and route clarity do not have to be pursued to their ultimate achievement. A highway system can tolerate some ambiguities within it so long as disorientation does not endanger safety or force travellers into annoying or significant errors.

The critical orientation points on any system are intersections. These are points of high attention where decisions have to be made. Their clarity is extremely important to the traveller.

There are three ways of achieving orientation on a highway system:

1. by differentiating and relating the character of the routes and the intersections in a systematic way.

2. by continuities of movement and character, so that major routes connect parts of the city both physically and visually.

3. by consistencies in direction and panoramic views, which assure the traveller of his spatial position.

A well-oriented system will allow travellers to understand continuous routes through the system, to relate the parts to each other, and to gain a reasonably clear sense of direction and position. However, excessive clarity can be undesirable too. The privacy of residential areas may depend on their seclusion, and a patently clear system may be uninteresting and unnecessary.

COMMENT: Although orientation in San Francisco is easy in the downtown area with its rectangular street system and with its hills which afford many views across the city, the highway system in other parts of the city by no means forms a clear system.

Orientation patterns contrast with the patterns of problems on other maps. The further away from the downtown area one travels, orientation difficulty increases; however, other environmental problems decrease.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

1. To achieve a circulation system in which the character of the parts is systemically differentiated yet related, some major themes might be considered. Well articulated gradients of character increasing in intensity towards downtown might serve to differentiate the intersections on some

of the more uniform radial routes. Such character gradients might be created by lighting, signs, furniture, or planting, or paving materials.

Parallel radial routes could be more systematically differentiated by drawing upon the particular quality through which they pass. These streets are the "front doors" of the districts through which they travel and representative groups in these districts might be interested in proposals that offer their main streets some distinction. Since the natural terrain of the city is already remarkably differentiated, the opening up of views of the hills and Bay at intersections and along routes would contribute to their sense of place.

2. To improve continuity on the highway system, minor alignment changes, intensive signing and the use of other street elements could link weakly connected parts of the system.

3. To increase directional orientation on those parts of the system where direction is ambiguous, efforts could be made to open up views, and to sign the route in such a way as to make clear its general direction.

ORIENTATION TO DESTINATIONS

DEFINITION: To find his destination, a traveller has to "read" the road environment as well as the signs. The most intensively used destinations should be the most clearly read if the road system is to be an efficient one. Furthermore, it

is almost certainly true that many urban facilities are underused compared to their potential use because of their hidden location. It has been found that urban inhabitants are relatively ignorant about urban facilities even when the facilities are important to them, such as the location of job opportunities, and educational, recreational or other facilities. Most people are strangers in their own city.

Beyond the need to clarify the location of destinations from the system, the road environment can play a broader educational and cultural role in the life of the city. It is a communications system carrying messages about how the city works, who lives in it, its history, economic base and natural setting. Route maps for tourists describe what can be seen and visited along the highway. The 49-mile Drive performs part of this function in San Francisco. The need to inform the urban inhabitant about his own city is just as great. It is important, therefore, that places of potential significance be identified and their visibility from the road system assessed.

There are three ways in which destinations or other places of general significance can be learned of from the road.

1. Signs have been the most common solution to the problem of orientation in highway systems. They are simple,

cheap and explicit. They do have some disadvantages, however. They are not continuous and cannot be seen from any distance; this means that the traveller has to survive from one to the next by other means. Also, they designate areas and places such as the Civic Center or Downtown, whose names are seldom made explicit on arrival.

2. Another means of orienting to destinations is to ensure that routes travelling to them are direct, preferably with frequent views.

3. Third, destinations and other places of significance can be marked externally so that they are visible from a distance. High office buildings mark the Financial District, the structural towers mark both the bridges, the dome marks the Civic Center.

COMMENT: The map shows that there are very few places on the highway system where travellers are well-oriented to the principal destinations of the city. Apparently, on most of San Francisco's street system it is unclear exactly where one is going. The signing of destinations is minimal and sporadic, and there are few meaningful views.

The "lost" areas are in the southwest corner of the city, where there are few important foci, where the terrain is complex and rolling, and where the streets move in all directions.

The most difficult streets of all are the circumferentials whose destinations are less obvious than the radials which bear in on the downtown area. Nineteenth Avenue, Ocean Avenue, Laguna-Honda Boulevard, Castro and Divisadero Streets and Army Street have no specific goals.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

1. A plan for the location of signs on the highway system, and the destinations they should signal is a necessity. In addition to this, city signs have an unrealized potential for enhancing, enlivening and dignifying the character of the city's road environment. The attention that New York, Boston, Montreal, and other cities are now giving to the redesign of their urban sign systems is an indication of their contribution to the urban scene. Since they are necessarily the foci of travellers' attention on the circulation system, they should be interesting, educational, and a delight. They could be graphic, as well as verbal, colored, electric, or three-dimensional so long as they "fit" with the particular character of their surroundings.

2. The external form of many destinations and places of significance could be more differentiated. High structures or other features could be encouraged in these areas. Distinctive colors and floodlighting or skylighting might be proposed.

3. To open up views of destinations, in some cases minor obstructions to their visibility can be removed. Minor changes in road alignment, or the reversal of one-way streets, can raise visibility.

4. All new and important facilities to be constructed in the city might be located and shaped to achieve an appropriate level of visibility. As discussed before, the most well-known buildings will be those which are present at intersections on the major circulation system, and which are distinctive in form, isolated from their surroundings. Highly visible and sensitive parts of the city might be saved for facilities of wide public significance, where strong controls could be exerted over the quality of their design.

5. Any new changes to the circulation system, or development along its corridors, should be examined in the light of whether they can offer new views, preserve old ones, or eliminate irrelevant ones.

Photographs

ROUTE CLARITY

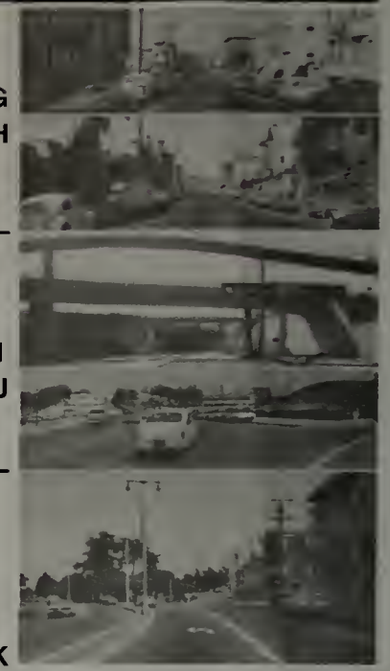
A The presence of the large gas tank, the change in alignment and a new
B view distinguish this section of the Southern Freeway. The Scottish Rite Temple on 19th Avenue at Sloat differentiates that intersection from the rest of the street by interrupting the continuous residential buildings along the east side. Continuous movement and character
C,D mark the views of both 19th Avenue and 7th Avenue. Long, straight alignment paired with a wide view of high towers makes it clear on
E Geary Boulevard that one is travelling eastbound towards Downtown.
F The panoramic view from upper Market Street enables the traveller to gain an accurate sense of position despite the serpentine alignment
G of the road. On the other hand, the two photographs of Pine Street
H are instances of its undifferentiated character. San Jose Avenue
I westbound is disrupted by the overhead structures of the Southern Freeway and frequent lane changes, which break the continuity of the route. The destinations here are clearly signed, but this is a situation where the traveller must become over-reliant on these signs.
J The Marina Boulevard at Buchannan is interrupted by an ambiguous
K change in direction and character. Lincoln Way at the point of juncture with Kezar Drive enters a phase where any clear sense of direction is lost.

ORIENTATION TO DESTINATIONS

A At this point on the James Lick Freeway, the combination of a verbal sign and a view of Downtown reassures the traveller of the direction of his destination, even though the sign structure disrupts the view.
B The axial view of City Hall on Fulton Street is a vivid example of a direct visual access to a destination. The view of the financial
C district towers from the James Lick Freeway presents a clear orienta-
D tion. Although Market Street alignment is indirect, it presents a brief panorama of major landmarks of the City and the Bay. While the
E Great Highway at this point allows a clear view of the breakers on the beach, subsequent stretches obscure views of the ocean.

F On the other hand, Kezar Drive is without signs or views, and this is compounded by a simultaneous change of direction. A similar lack
G of signs, views or directions on San Jose Avenue produces the same
H,I sense of disorientation. Along Mission Street and Divisadero Street there are no signs or views of major landmarks or destinations and therefore no sense of the overall structure of the City.

CLARITY OF THE ROUTE

clarity +	Travelers gain a clear orientation on the system if:	Travelers lose a sense of where they are and a sense of direction if	− disorientation
	differentiation· INTERSECTIONS AND SECTIONS OF THE ROAD ARE CLEARLY DIFFERENTIATED IN A SYSTEMATIC WAY	differentiation· THE ROUTE IS UNDIFFERENTIATED, ALL THE SAME, OR RANDOMLY CHANGING, AND INTERSECTING STREETS ARE UNDIFFERENTIATED	
	continuity· MOVEMENT AND CHARACTER ARE CONTINUOUS ALONG IMPORTANT ROUTES, EVEN THROUGH INTERSECTIONS	continuity· MOVEMENT IS CONTINUALLY DISRUPTED OR AMBIGUOUS AND THE CHARACTER BREAKS TOO DRAMATICALLY, ESPECIALLY IN THREE OR FIVE STREET INTERSECTIONS	
	direction· DIRECTIONS REMAIN CONSISTENT OR CHANGE DEFINITELY AND VISIBILITY AROUND THE ROAD IS HIGH TO AID SPATIAL REFERENCING	direction· DIRECTIONS DO NOT CHANGE CLEARLY AND CONSISTENTLY, ROADS CURVE AMBIGUOUSLY AND THERE ARE NO ACCOMPANYING VIEWS OF LANDMARKS OR REFERENCE POINTS	

ROAD ENVIRONMENT SURVEY: CRITERIA AND RATING DESCRIPTIONS

ORIENTATION TO MAJOR DESTINATIONS

CLARITY
AVERAGE
DISORIENTATION
DIRECTION OF SURVEY RATING

clarity +	Many travelers will benefit from a clear orientation to major destinations if:	Travelers cannot find major destinations easily if:	− disorientation
	signs· FREQUENT SIGNING WHICH IS GRAPHICALLY AND VERBALLY CONCISE AND DISTINCT	signs· THE ROAD SYSTEM LACKS CLEAR SIGNS INDICATING THE CORRECT ROUTE TO MAJOR DESTINATIONS	
	direct routes· ROUTES WHICH ARE DIRECT AND ALLOW VIEWS OF THE DESTINATION	direct routes· ROUTES TO THEM ARE INDIRECT WITHOUT VIEWS OF THE DESTINATION	
	views· VIEWS OF LANDMARKS THAT ARE DESTINATIONS OR SIGNAL DESTINATIONS	views· DESTINATIONS LACK VISUAL PROMINENCE OR IDENTIFICATION BY NEARBY LANDMARKS	

SAFETY AND EASE OF MOVEMENT

DEFINITION: Many of the previously defined problems -- poor maintenance, constriction, monotony, excessive complexity or disorientation -- if present in extreme form, can make driving difficult or even a menace to safety on the road. However, there may be cases where the apparent danger of a road prevents accidents because drivers take more care, and apparently safe parts are more dangerous, because drivers relax.

COMMENT: The problem points on the system are principally at intersections and along commercial streets where there is fast heavy traffic and parked cars. Narrow, sloping streets provide another set of problems. The entries into the city from the Golden Gate and Bay Bridges which both project traffic downhill through a quick series of decision points are prime examples. In rainy weather these entries can be frightening.

INTERSECTION TRAFFIC ACCIDENT MAP: The accident location map reports only accidents at intersections on city streets. It cannot be correlated directly with the apparent ease and safety ratings since accident rates are also affected by traffic volumes. Time has not allowed us to make statistical comparisons of the accident data with volumes and with the other aspects of environmental quality. Even so, it is clear that

the inner parts of the system have higher rates.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

1. At a minimum level of investment, efforts should be made to slow traffic down and provide non-skid surfaces and other safety devices at the primary danger points on the system. This would reduce capacity but increase safety.

2. Clearer guidance from sign systems and stronger channel markings could also alleviate some anxieties.

3. Repair of road surfaces along The Embarcadero and around the tracks of the Muni system along Ocean Avenue and other streets could reduce hazards in these areas.

4. The elimination of diagonal and other parking on fast traffic streets, or the slowing of traffic on streets with parked cars are two policies which should be considered. The use of separator strips and the provision of service roads between parking and traffic increases safety and convenience when there is adequate width in the channel.

5. At a higher level of investment the problems of congestion and danger on the city's street system could be resolved in one or a combination of the following ways:

a. through new freeways;

b. by creating more one-way streets and diffusing traffic through residential areas;

c. by upgrading the capacity and safety of the existing

arterial street system, through grade separated intersections, cuts and overpasses at selected points or along whole routes,

d. by improving the city's mass transit system through increased speeds, frequency of service, and convenience. The use of transit to reach congested areas can also be encouraged by increasing driver costs (higher parking fees, etc.).

A combination of the latter two choices appears most preferable.

PHOTOGRAPHS

All the examples were taken in good weather, during the daytime, outside rush hours. They, therefore, give little indication of what safety conditions are like under rainy, foggy, night-time or rush-hour conditions.

SAFETY AND EASE OF MOVEMENT

A,B Portola Drive and Sloat Boulevard are examples of moderate curves
C and rolling terrain with ample views ahead. Brotherhood Way and
D Sloat Boulevard both have median strips and are three lanes each
E way. The line of trees on Junipero Serra Boulevard separate the sidewalk from the road and the absence of parked cars allows
F pedestrians to be visible yet clearly separated. Sunset Boulevard is one of the few well-engineered off-grade intersections in the
G City. The Southern Freeway, with good surfaces and adequate shoulders shows some of the safety improvements being incorporated in new freeway design. The separation of uses from the road is
H demonstrated by the apartments along Brotherhood Way and houses
I along Junipero Serra Boulevard. Both show how these uses are separated visually and functionally from the roadway by trees or strips of lawn and parallel local streets.

J The intersection of Woodside, Dewey and Laguna Honda Boulevard is more a problem of movement difficulty than of actual danger, since traffic congestion will slow down oncoming traffic. This is typical
K of the crowded conditions on many inner-city streets. On Ocean Avenue the traffic lanes are constricted. The presence of cars, the frequent curb-cuts, and many intersections suggests that travel along this street during rush hours is impeded by cars emerging from garages or streetcars stopping to discharge and pick up passengers.
L Bay Street is apparently more dangerous than the previous example because high speed is attempted, lanes are narrow, parking is on both sides, and commercial and residential uses line both sides of
M the street. Geary Boulevard was chosen mainly to illustrate the diagonal parking problem where cars have to back into oncoming traffic. At least this street has three travel lanes allowing two to pass while the third is taken up by merging parkers. The blind
N corner on upper Market Street provides a risky moment even though traffic is one-way. The downhill slope adds to the sense of speed.
O The curving tracks at the intersection of Ocean Avenue at Phelan Avenue creates serious hazards, especially in rainy weather, for
P smaller cars and motorcycles. Along The Embarcadero, the general surface of the road adds to the apparent insecurity of travelling past poorly defined intersections and among slower-moving cargo handling equipment. Another feeling of danger and discomfort occurs when adjacent commercial buildings create activities which
Q spill onto the road. This is illustrated on both Bay Street at
R Taylor Street and Potrero Avenue near 16th Street.

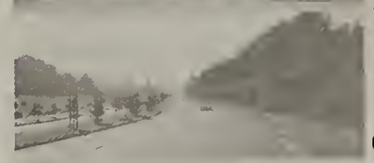
SAFETY AND EASE OF MOVEMENT

1968 INTERSECTION TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

VERY HIGH ACCIDENT LOCATION ● 20-64

HIGH ACCIDENT LOCATION ○ 10-19

Source: Traffic Engineering Division, Department of Public Works

ease/safety +		TRAVELERS FEEL SAFE AND COMFORTABLE IF ROADS HAVE:	TRAVELERS MAY FEEL A ROADWAY IS UNSAFE OR DIFFICULT TO DRIVE ON IF IT HAS:		— discomfort/danger
 	A B	alignment· APPROPRIATE SPEEDS AND TRAFFIC VOLUMES FOR THEIR DESIGNED CAPACITIES, WITH WELL-TIMED DECISION SEQUENCES, AMPLE FOREWARNING, AND MODERATELY CHANGING ALIGNMENTS	alignment· EXCESSIVE SPEEDS, EXCESSIVE TRAFFIC VOLUMES, CONGESTION, SUDDEN STOPS, STOP-GO ROUTES, MERGING TRAFFIC, LEFT TURN CONFLICTS, STEEP OR CHANGING ALIGNMENTS, EXCESSIVE NUMBERS OF DECISIONS, OR CONFLICTS WITH TRUCKS OR TRANSIT VEHICLES	J	
 	C D	width· TWO-WAY SEPARATIONS AND SPACIOUS LANES	width· NARROW LANES AND NO SEPARATION OF OPPOSING TRAFFIC FLOWS	K L	 
	E	parking· NO PARKED VEHICLES AND SEPARATED OR CONTROLLED PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENTS	parking· PARKED VEHICLES, ESPECIALLY AT AN ANGLE OR PERPENDICULAR, MANY PEDESTRIANS CROSSING OR CHILDREN PLAYING NEAR THE ROAD	M	
	F	intersections· WELL-ENGINEERED INTERSECTIONS WITH GOOD TRAFFIC CONTROL SIGNS OR STOP LIGHTS	intersections· UNSIGNED OR TRAFFIC CONTROLLED INTERSECTIONS OR POOR SIGHT LINES AT INTERSECTIONS	N	
	G	surface and detail· NEW PAVEMENT, ANTI-SKID SURFACES, AND STRONG CURBS, GUARD RAILS AND MEDIAN STRIPS	surface and detail· SLIPPERY, BROKEN SURFACES, CURBS AND MEDIANS; PATCHED AND ROUGH PAVEMENT, RAILROAD TRACKS IN ROAD OR TRASH AND JUNK ON THE ROAD	O P	 
 	H I	adjacent uses· SEPARATED ADJACENT USES AND ACTIVITIES	adjacent uses· MANY ADJACENT USES WITH A HIGH DEGREE OF ACTIVITY FRONTING ON THE ROADWAY	Q R	 

ROAD ENVIRONMENT SURVEY: CRITERIA AND RATING DESCRIPTIONS

LIVABILITY

DEFINITION: All the previous criteria have assessed the road system from the viewpoint of the traveller. Those who live, work, or otherwise use the buildings and land alongside the system should be part of its evaluation. A separate study is being made of the effects of traffic on the residential life of the city.

Livability alongside the highway system will depend primarily on the uses that occur there:

a. Residential: Usually major traffic arteries cause noise problems, parking difficulties, restrict social interaction across the street, prevent children from playing, and destroy the identity of residential blocks.

Where there are apartments, preferably air-conditioned, and where the occupants are single people or couples without children, conditions may be tolerated or ignored. This adaptation may only have taken place in the most affluent areas of the city.

b. Commercial: Major traffic arteries can be a nuisance in local commercial areas if through-traffic causes congestion and prevents those who want to shop from achieving their purpose.

c. Industrial: Passing traffic is usually no major problem to industrial areas.

d. Recreational: Active recreational uses can be acceptable alongside traffic arteries, but usually noise and vision need to be screened off. For passive recreation, the traffic environment is more detrimental.

Livability problems around a traffic artery will depend also on a number of other variables:

a. the width of the channel, and the distance of buildings from the traffic lanes;

b. the presence of view and acoustic barriers between surrounding uses and traffic;

c. the ability to cross safely from one side of the channel to the other, i.e., its non-disruptive effects on local community activities,

d. the blending and fitting of the channel within the surrounding environment

e. the channel's contribution to local identity and character.

COMMENT: From the above assumptions, the most serious problems of livability will occur where residential streets are also major arterials, and particularly in less affluent areas. The inner areas of the western and southern entries along Franklin, Gough, Pine, Bush, Turk, Golden Gate, Oak and Fell, Duboce and 14th, and the streets through the Mission are likely to be the most serious problem areas. Outside of the inner areas, 19th Avenue, 6th and 7th, upper Market and parts of Portola are probably the most severe problem areas.

CONCLUSIONS

The sections on policy implications are preliminary in nature. They suggest a number of means whereby the present road environment of San Francisco can be improved.

In general, the strategies may include:

a. direct improvement of the road rights-of-way by resurfacing, curbing, landscaping, or the provision of parking, service roads, street furniture, signs, lighting or other amenities;

b. by indirect controls over development along the system, including setback zoning, height zoning and possibly new types of sign or view zoning;

c. by developing a set of environmental guidelines for all private and public agencies affecting the road environment of the city.

Many of the deficiencies recorded here are well known to the agencies involved, but they have limited resources. In a few places, plans are already underway to remedy the defects. By collecting this information together in graphic form, this survey exposes the need for more investment in the environment of San Francisco's highway system.

Finally, the deficiencies of the road environment recorded are the result of the disjointed way in which San Francisco, like all U. S. cities, has been developed. Private and public agencies and individuals continuously effect changes in the highway environment without any coordination. By surveying the system as one environment from the user's viewpoint the report intends to encourage more coordination.

APPENDIX TO THE ROAD ENVIRONMENT SURVEY

NOTES ON METHODOLOGY

ADVANTAGES OF RATING BY SEPARATE CRITERIA: The main advantage of rating is that it forces judgments about where the most severe problems on the highway system are located and which streets are "good" or pleasant. Highly rated streets can also function as good models for future design.

The advantages of rating by separate criteria are several.

a. The components of environmental quality are made more definite and therefore more subject to public discussion.

b. Ratings by individual criteria are easier to score and more reliable, i.e., people are more likely to agree on whether a road is directionally clear, or spacious, whereas they may not agree on an overall judgment of quality.

c. Separate criteria allow better predictions of how different kinds of travellers will rate environmental quality, for traveller differences usually depend on the different weights they give to each criterion. Drivers, for instance, will be more concerned with safety and orientation, while passengers may be more interested in the quality of the environment and its interest.

For these reasons no overall ratings of the system have been made.

DIFFICULTIES OF RATING ENVIRONMENTS:

1. One difficulty of having "experts" rate routes is that their ratings are subjective and inconsistent. In psychological research, expert ratings are frequently used. The standard technique is to have two experts rate separately, then to compare their results for reliability. In this study, resources were insufficient to do more than spot check the principal rater's scores. The ratings must thus be considered subjective although a number of people have now reviewed them.

2. The reader will find points with which he differs. In the Rating Tables, for example, he may question the importance of a criterion, he may prefer the negative to the positive example, or he may differ with the actual ratings over the whole system.

Interviews with travellers on San Francisco's highway system should be conducted to determine the criteria by which they judge the system and to improve reliability. Travellers could be asked to rate various routes and to explain the reasons for their ratings. They could be asked their opinions of the proposed rating system. Criteria profiles for traveller types - particularly for commuter/irregular, driver/passenger and class differences could be obtained. Without these checks, it is difficult to determine which of these criteria - with the exception of safety - is most important for each traveller group. Thus, in this study, each criterion has been considered equally important.

EXTERNAL FORM AND IMAGE SURVEY

INTRODUCTION: Views are part of the distinctive character of San Francisco, and this study focuses on the City's major views, ones which present vast panoramas or prominent combinations of natural and man-made forms. Elements of such "big views" are varied. Often they entail natural features as hills, valleys, open spaces, and the ocean. Other times man-made elements like freeways, patterns of building development, even groups of individual buildings are important. Whatever their composition, though, this survey considers where they are, what they contain, and what value they have. This survey ultimately is concerned with the overall form and image of San Francisco - to both its visitors and residents. The following pages present the components of that form: those physical design elements of the City - their identity, description, and value.

PURPOSE: This report is concerned with more than just identifying the City's magnificent views. A major task for the San Francisco Urban Design Study is how to improve and preserve them. This section of the report starts on such a task by first making a graphic record of the City's existing skyline and its massive patterns, then selecting and evaluating them for their visually significant features. These first two necessary steps provide a background for height and view preservation policies. These will then become an important basis for evaluating future development proposals.

SURVEY APPROACH: The approach used here was to study the physical form of the City by first defining its important "view districts", or areas of important views. This provided a manageable framework for study. Each of these districts was then photographed, and, as can be seen on the following pages, photographs consisted of both panoramic "overviews" from a vantage point at the boundary and from a high point within the area to show its surrounding skyline. These photographs were analyzed and the significant visual elements identified according to the following criteria:

1. Size - massive, bulky, high
2. Visibility - extensive, prominent, distinct
3. Extensiveness - covering a large area
4. Order - systematic, regular
5. Permanence - lasting (20-30 years for man-made elements)
6. Repetition - frequent, recurring
7. Frequent Usage - used widely by a large number of people
8. Orientation Point - frequently used visual reference point
9. Importance - the value people place upon a feature

These criteria tend to exclude elements which occur only in one view district. However, they are usually treated within the textual narrative accompanying each set of view photographs included in this section of the report.

The photographs of each view district were then evaluated for:

1. Elements which dominated views or created unique and distinctive physical patterns, and
2. Elements which connoted strong positive or negative associations, or showed seeming incompatibility or ugliness.

For each of the view districts presented in this report, there are accompanying written narratives, graphic notations, and diagrams.

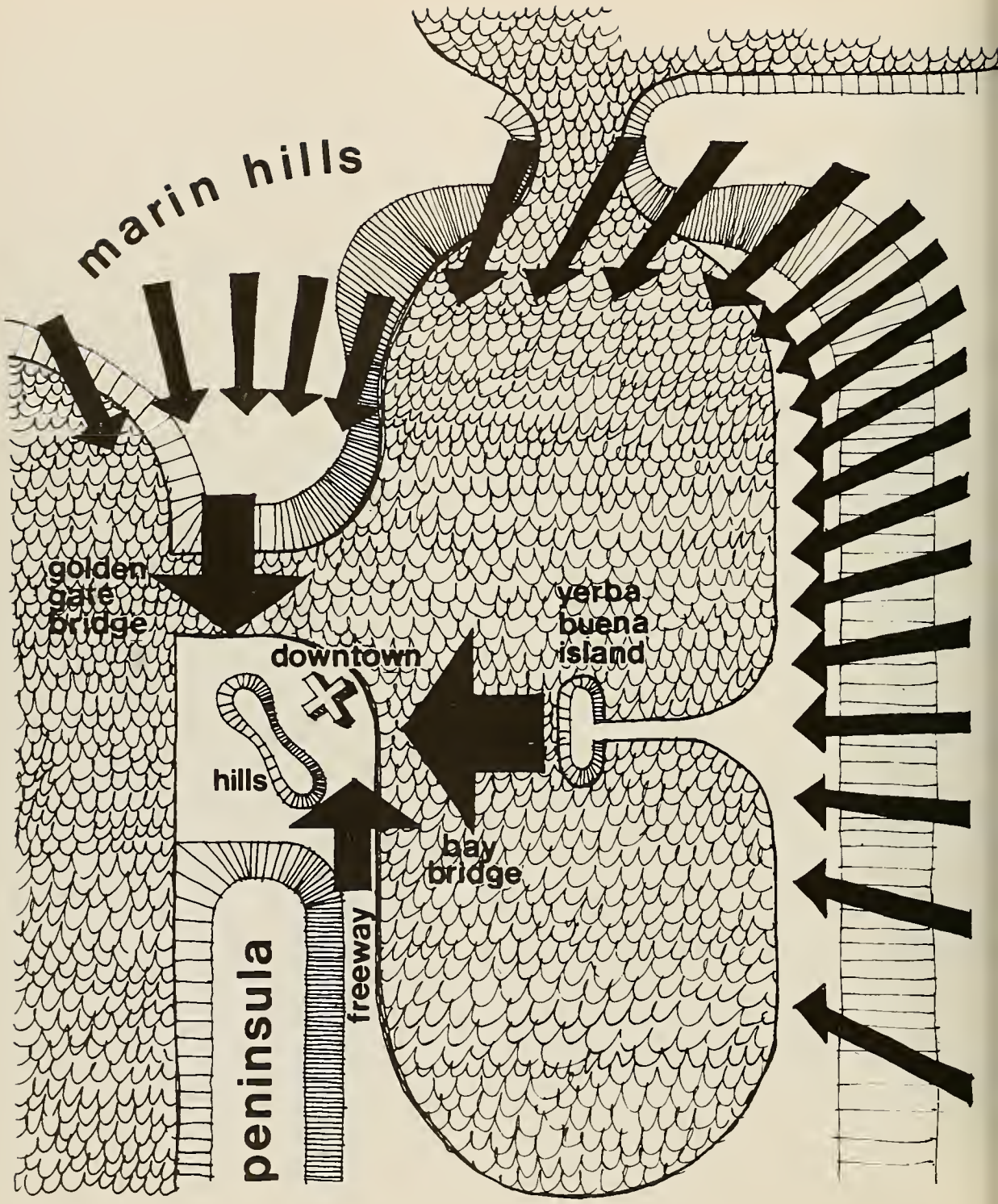
Summing these elements and their districts led to an overall presentation and evaluation of the City's "external" form and image. In all cases the use of photographs was supplemented by direct field observation from a variety of locations.

ORGANIZATION OF DATA: Following this section is a brief presentation of the locational importance San Francisco has in its regional setting. This is illustrated with three panoramas of the City as seen from across the Bay or from the San Bruno Mountains.

Next is a catalog and discussion of specific natural and man-made elements that comprise the City's external pattern and image. In this discussion, there are examples of each element and they are illustrated in a plate, Natural Elements of the City Form.

The third plate, Vantage Points for the Photographic Survey, locates view districts in San Francisco as well as the points from which the illustrative photographs were taken. This is followed by the Panoramic Photo Survey. Due to space limitations for this report, panoramas and written commentary are not included for some districts. These will be included in a separate report.

At the conclusion of these photographs, all the visual elements throughout the City are combined on a map, Summary of Visual Elements of City Form. These elements and their forms are then evaluated and presented with notes on the final map, Visual Problems and Potentials.


marin hills
golden gate bridge
downtown
yerba buena island
hills
bay bridge
freeway
peninsula

The diagram on the opposite page schematically presents San Francisco's visual setting in the Bay Area.

METROPOLITAN REGIONAL SETTING

The visual setting of San Francisco in the metropolitan area may be described as a stage center in a vast natural amphitheater. The city stands clearly defined in its urbanized surroundings by a ring of natural open space, primarily composed of the broad expanse of the San Francisco Bay on the east and north, and the Pacific Ocean to the west. The hills of Berkeley, Oakland, and Marin County provide amphitheater-like slopes from which to view the centerpiece. The specific vantage points such as the Marin headlands, Sausalito hillsides, the various islands and the East Bay slopes, in turn become the views for San Franciscans across an imposing natural water foreground. The interplay of viewer and viewed is further enriched from within San Francisco by a wide choice of

inner spectacles, consisting largely of the city itself -- its own hills and the texture of man-made development. This awareness of the viewer's position in such a powerful natural setting from the vantage point of a man-made environment is the essence of the San Franciscan's typically dramatic and memorable visual experience. The impact is intensified for those who can see the Golden Gate Bridge which seems to link the man-made settlement with nature beyond. The urban centerpiece is on constant display from a point on the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge in the North Bay along the length of the East Bay communities until a point south of the Oakland Bay Bridge. Perception of the city from across the Bay is frequently a continuous experience from roads and homes in the East Bay hills.

Paradoxically, the communities south of San Francisco on its peninsula and closest to it, experience no visual tie to it except for a limited number of vantage points. The San Bruno Mountains block both development and view and limit physical entry points to one major and two minor locations.

The northern face of the city - from the Marin County headland

The eastern face of the city - from Yerba Buena Island

The southern skyline of the city - from McLaren Park

ELEMENTS OF EXTERNAL FORM AND IMAGE - NATURAL ELEMENTS

THE HILLS: From within or without, San Francisco is a changing sculptural spectacle for the viewer's eyes. When one climbs or descends these hills, by vehicle or foot, sheer physical exhilaration, fatigue or even fear intensifies the experience of movement and one realizes how important the natural topographical gift is to the image of this City. Despite their relative steepness in contrast to the flat valleys from which they rise, San Francisco's hills are small in bulk compared to the southerly San Bruno Mountains or Marin County's headlands. Thus, they are in scale with the pedestrian by virtue of the ease with which he can surmount them both physically and visually. The balance between setting, settler, and his activities is a precarious one, however, and is easily upset when the structures built to house these activities are unsympathetically suited or collectively become too large.

THE VALLEYS AND FLAT AREAS: The natural counterpart to the hills are the easily traversed and easily built upon valleys and plains, the largest of which generally lie in the west and north portions of the City. Although they, too, are smaller in size than most other flat areas of the Bay region, they are in sharp contrast to the City's hills and, being

relatively evenly developed, they often present an abstract image which is bland, and uninteresting.

Physically, these areas may be the easiest to change. Certainly modifications in the bulk and height of development would be immediately visible. The physical characteristics of these areas also express social and economic factors and proposed changes must be measured against these factors as well as the City-wide importance such areas have for the overall form and image of the City. The hills have no meaning without the plains.

THE SEA AND BAY SHORES:. The physical wholeness of San Francisco lies largely in its sharply defined peninsula form, surrounded on three sides by water. Although modified by filling, the peninsula form remains visible and can still be experienced by those who use its waterside activities. The mental image of water is heightened not only by the water-related activities of the few beaches, sailing and shipping and some commercial recreation, but also by the sounds, odors, and climatology associated with the water. Hence, the water edge is an important element in the City's exterior form and image. Much remains to be done, however, if this physical element is to remain more than an image. For example, accessibility to pedestrian or motorist is actually available in few

places: Baker Beach, the Marina Green, Aquatic Park, Fisherman's Wharf and along the Great Highway. Visual access exists for the hill dwellers, but is threatened by high-rising waterfront development. Only discontinuous physical or visual access is possible along the entire perimeter.

Major Open Spaces and Tree Groups: Golden Gate Park, the Presidio, Twin Peaks, Stern Grove, McLaren Park, Mount Davidson and Lake Merced are large enough to be important City-wide form and image determinants. The first two are probably universally recognized landmarks. The others remain key elements of the City's physical form but do not yet contribute strongly to its overall image.

WATERCOURSES AND OTHER SMALL WATER BODIES: These natural elements have all but vanished, although historically they affected the location and form of activity and building. Their location and very existence today are virtually unknown to the public and in most cases they have been built over, or integrated into the City's drainage system, thus rendering restoration uneconomical. They should be regarded only as potential long-range physical resources. In those cases where they lie near a park or area being redeveloped, they could be restored and thus add another item of nature to the City's physical being.

NATURAL ELEMENTS OF THE CITY FORM

NATURAL OPEN SPACE
MAJOR TREE GROUPINGS
NATURAL SHORELINE
STREAMS & WATER BODIES (1848)
HILLS

ELEMENTS OF EXTERNAL FORM AND IMAGE - MAN-MADE ELEMENTS

In general, few types of man-made form meet the selection criteria particularly as to absolute size, extent, and popular concern to rank with the major natural elements of the City's overall physical form and image. There are certain building clusters or aggregations which do, as do the two bridges and all the existing freeways. Individual structures rarely contribute both sheer size and widely perceived imageability to be included in this analysis. Hence, the Palace of Fine Arts has physical importance at a local scale, in a particular area of the City, but is not a constituent part of San Francisco's image to the entire spectrum of the City's inhabitants. It does play an important physical role for the daily commuter from Marin County. This resident versus visitor issue will be discussed further. Hence, it, and similar individual structures crucial to form and image at the local neighborhood level, does not meet the criteria for inclusion in this analysis. The bridges, however, are physically dominant, highly visible and critical factors in the daily life and awareness of inhabitants and visitors alike.

MAJOR BUILDING GROUPS:: At City-wide scale, clusters or aggregations of buildings are considered to be more important determinants of form and image than individual structures. More-

over, it is difficult to disassociate building groups from the activities they house, particularly when these activities are highly visible, often visited, or frequently the subject of news commentary. Thus, the downtown office district has a meaning or significance to many which supplements its actual physical form much as Wall Street in Manhattan probably is synonymous with "financial power" to citizens throughout the world. Similarly, Telegraph Hill's physical texture of small residential structures and tiny open spaces suggests to many a conglomerate social and economic context different from that of Russian Hill although it is primarily residential. Perhaps symbolically, Russian Hill has acquired several major high-rise apartment houses which both express and are locations for a high income life style.

VIEWS: Views are the visual opportunities which result from the physical coincidence of a vantage point and a spectacle seen at a distance. They are part man-made and part natural. In San Francisco, the combination of hills and low areas are the inevitable components of views at the City-wide scale. An infinite number of small vistas and views at the near, middle, and far distances exist throughout the City, between buildings, down streets, from doorways, etc. They are identified here as primarily image elements because they are one of the characteristics most widely understood as part of San Francisco.

BRIDGES AND FREEWAYS: The size and scale, frequency of use and widespread popular concern and awareness easily qualifies these structures as City-wide form and image elements. The Golden Gate Bridge may be an image element almost as universally recognized as Paris' Eiffel Tower.

The freeways, however, stir extremes of ambivalence, depending on point of view, but must be dealt with as form and image elements because of their sheer size and use.

INDIVIDUAL BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES: A few of these meet the criteria and will be discussed as visual landmarks within the View District analyses. The aforementioned Palace of Fine Arts, the Bank of America building and Coit Tower are examples.

VANTAGE POINTS FOR THE PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEY

FOCUS OF VIEW DISTRICT
1B PANORAMA NUMBER

NOTE: 2A,B; 4A,B,C; 6A,B; 12A,B,C; AND 15A,B ARE INCLUDED IN REPORT

LEGEND FOR THE PANORAMIC PHOTO SURVEY

ACCESSIBLE AND UNDEVELOPED WATER'S EDGE		NATURAL SHORELINE
PROMINENT HILL FORM IN A NATURAL STATE		UNDEVELOPED HILL
EXTENSIVE AREA OF TREE COVERAGE IN AN UNDEVELOPED SITUATION		PROMINENT TREE STAND
HIGHLY DISTINCTIVE AND SINGULAR ELEMENT IN VIEW		LANDMARK
AREA OF VISUAL ATTENTION		FOCAL AREA
BUILDING OUT OF SCALE WITH IMMEDIATE ENVIRONS OR INAPPROPRIATELY SITED		DISRUPTIVE BUILDING SITUATION
DEVELOPMENT PATTERN IMPROPERLY RELATED TO ITS PHYSICAL SETTING		INAPPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT PATTERN
DEVELOPMENT PATTERN SYMPATHETICALLY RESPONSIVE TO ITS PHYSICAL SETTING		APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT PATTERN
DISTINCT AS A VISUAL BARRIER, EDGE, OR MAJOR FORM ELEMENT OF THE DISTRICT		VISUALLY PROMINENT ROAD
DISTINCT AREA OF AGREEABLE SCALE, TEXTURE, CHARACTER OF DEVELOPMENT -- GENERALLY IMPLIES CONSERVATION OR ENHANCEMENT OF EXISTING CONDITION	AREA OF POSITIVE CHARACTER	
DISTINCT AREA OF UNRESOLVED SCALE, TEXTURE, CHARACTER OF DEVELOPMENT -- GENERALLY IMPLIES POTENTIAL FOR CHANGE WITHIN THE AREA	AREA OF NEUTRAL CHARACTER	
DISTINCT AREA OF DISAGREEABLE OR INAPPROPRIATE SCALE, TEXTURE AND CHARACTER OF DEVELOPMENT -- IMPLIES NEED FOR CHANGE WITHIN AREA	AREA OF NEGATIVE CHARACTER	
LOCATED VANTAGE POINT FOR CORRESPONDING PANORAMIC PHOTOS	9B	

PANORAMIC PHOTO SURVEY

LOOKING NORTHEAST OVER FISHERMAN'S WHARF AREA 2A
(From S.F. Art Institute - Chestnut and Leavenworth)

This view focuses on an area which is striking for its inappropriate development pattern. What is seen is an environment which is heavily auto-oriented which should instead be largely pedestrian-oriented. There are absolutely no pedestrian precincts or pathways (other than normal sidewalks) within this particular view area. The nucleus of such development -- Ghirardelli Square/Aquatic Park/ The Cannery -- are situated off to the left of the scene. Even these are, as yet, disconnected from each other by busy streets. A simple solution would be to build a pedestrian bridge and viewing platform crossing Beach Street from the upper levels of Ghirardelli Square to Aquatic Park. A connection could be made to Aquatic Park from the Cannery mall through the State-owned Hazlett Warehouse and under Hyde Street into an opening near the cable car turnaround.

Still considering pedestrian movement, much of the water activity is walled from pedestrian view by buildings. Those open areas that exist at the water's edge are devoted to parking lots. It might be interesting to note that the largest pedestrian area at the water's edge shown in this photo is the upper deck of the Balclutha. This suggests the potentiality for City-owned barges developed as floating parklets to be

docked here as interim provisions for water-oriented open space until such can be provided on land by future development. The most dramatic illustration of walling-off of the waterfront is clearly seen in this view where only the smokestacks of ships can be seen above embarcadero buildings.

Another problem clearly apparent is the general disregard for the appearance of rooftops to the viewers on the hillsides surrounding the area. The only noticeable exception if that of the Longshoremen's Meeting Hall. Restrictions or incentives should be enforced throughout the area to eliminate this rooftop litter. This, plus the general tawdriness of so much of the area, the disproportionate amount of asphalt in the area, and the total lack of landscaping leaves a very negative impression of what should be one of the most attractive prospects within the city.

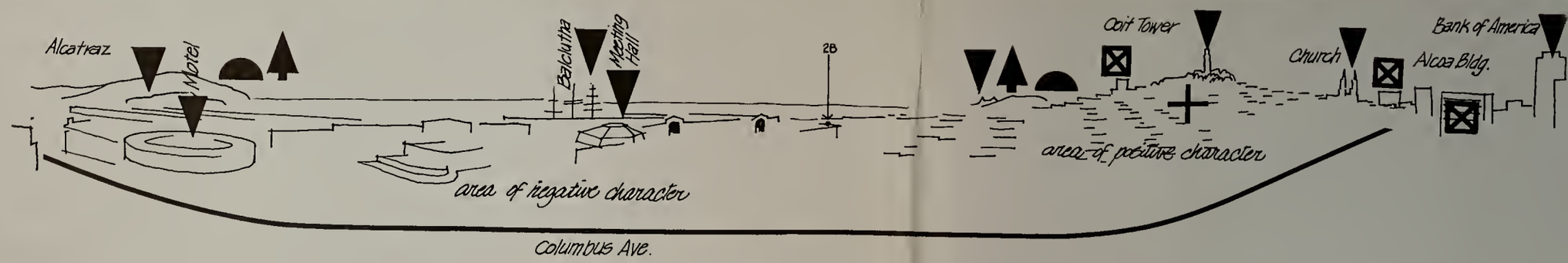
LOOKING SOUTHWARD BETWEEN TELEGRAPH HILL AND RUSSIAN HILL: - 2B
(From roof of the Akron-Bay and Powell)

The generally uniform height and pattern of low-rise development is a pleasing response to the two hill forms. The clustering of towers on Russian Hill gives dramatic emphasis to these undulations of skyline as does the singular vertical element -- Coit Tower -- on Telegraph Hill. Burgeoning high-rise development at the northern end of the Russian Hill area (right side of photo) could continue this pattern of development in an appropriate manner. In particular, three buildings are visible

here which are exceptions to this general pattern of development. One contributes favorably to the scene and two seriously detract from it. To the lower left of Coit Tower a building out of scale with surrounding buildings is clearly visible. It is disruptive of the otherwise regular profile of Telegraph Hill. Any future such buildings should be prohibited, particularly on the more sensitive western and southern slopes of the hill. Near the center of the view are the twin spires of Sts. Peter and Paul Church. This would otherwise be the most objectionable location for a large building mass in this skyline. However, these towers are of such sculptural quality that they appropriately stand isolated and appear in pleasing juxtaposition to the surrounding scale of development. Just below the Summit Apartment tower on Russian Hill is an apartment slab which is very disruptive to its immediate environs. Its inconsiderate siting blocks views of the hill from a length of Columbus Avenue near its base. Its mass is totally out of scale with surrounding buildings. Even a few more buildings so badly located as this one could destroy the hill-and-bowl effect which so attractively characterizes this scene.

ocator map

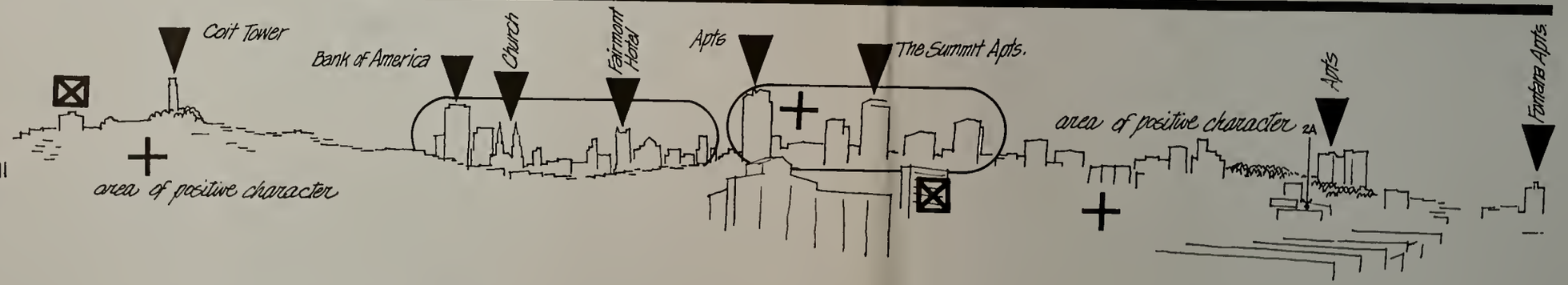
oking northeast
er Fisherman's Wharf
om SF Art Institute -
hestnut & Leavenworth



2A

2B

oking southward
tween Telegraph Hill - Russian Hill
om the roof of the Akron - Bay & Powell



LOOKING NORTHEAST OVER DOWNTOWN AND MISSION DISTRICT - 4A
(From Corona Heights Playground)

The central area of the panorama is the flat plain of the Mission District. Although the Mission, as a distinct entity, is high in the consciousness of San Franciscans, its edges are barely discernible from this vantage point. The foreground edge is clearly defined by the semicircular line of hills extending from the north (left of picture) around to Bernal Hills (right center of picture) which marks the southern limit of the district. The eastern edge is seen at the base of Potrero Hill and is sharply delineated by the James Lick Freeway, barely visible here. The intersecting Central Freeway and the upper portion of Market Street are identified in the panorama and together form the northern edge of the district. The continuity of these elements is tenuous when viewed in this perspective, but is clear in a plan view of the city.

In appearance, the Mission District seems to contain all the elements of a self-contained community -- industry, institutions, residential area, major park, a large commercial core. This variety of identifiable use areas within the district could be the basis for future policy governing urban design decisions within the community. If the Mission is to be characterized as a somewhat self-contained community, then those various elements just mentioned should be visually reinforced. This means that Mission Street, for example, might be given new

vertical character to mark it as the commercial spine of the district. New institutional buildings might be located completely within the district to express its relative self-sufficiency.

A nucleus of a community institutional core appears in this view as a focal area containing Mission Dolores, Mission High School, and Mission Park. The two landmark towers identified, and the large open area, already give a high degree of image-ability to the immediate environs. Additional community buildings might be related to this nucleus in an extension toward Market Street to give an even stronger image to the core and to orient it to this important city arterial. Any diffusion of new form elements away from this core are probably best situated eastward. Any large-scale elements located away from this core in a westerly direction (toward the foreground) would intrude into the integrity of the Noe Valley bowl which is seen in the right foreground. Although Noe Valley is topographically an adjunct to the Mission plain, it does have some aspects of a distinct enclave. Again, a design policy decision could take two directions regarding this area -- to relate it more strongly toward "the Mission" or to emphasize its distinctiveness. Compatible with either direction, is the potential for limited high-rise development on Noe Hill, which is the wooded promontory visible directly in the foreground of Bernal Hill. As with other large sections of the city, the regularity

of the street grid system is apparent.

In this panorama, the downtown skyline appears far less imposing than from other vantage points. This is due principally to the fact that this aspect is parallel to the axis of development alongside Market Street.

The downtown cluster is more cohesive when viewed from this direction, and that cohesiveness should be a priority concern of policy regarding future buildings there. This cohesiveness of development is important to maintain the distinct identity of the individual areas. Three distinct clusters are seen in this view in close proximity -- Western Addition, Nob Hill, and the Downtown. The separate character of each should be maintained.

The center foreground of the panorama is an area of ambiguous character. This triangular area is defined by the hills from which it is viewed here, the line of Market Street at its southern edge and a line implied between the Mint, Franklin Hospital, and St. Joseph's Hospital at the left edge of the picture. Visually, this area seems separate from surrounding areas, yet seems to have no character of its own. In a plan of the city, this area appears as the convergence of several major linear elements of the city -- Market Street, Dolores

Street, Central Freeway, Haight Street, Divisadero Street, the Panhandle, and the thrust of the ridge line terminating in Buena Vista Park. What is implied in a plan view is that this area is a centroid of city-wide activity. But, little of that is apparent in the panoramic view. This seems an appropriate area for special consideration in continuing design studies.

LOOKING NORTHEAST OVER DOWNTOWN AND MISSION STREET - 4B
(From Mission Park)

What is illustrated is one of the most important viewing situations within the city. Mission Park is centrally located at the edge of the flat Mission plain. The park is at a highly accessible location for residents of the Mission. It is a place where the inhabitants can, while remaining within their own territory, emerge above their immediate environment and be afforded a view of the downtown skyline as well as several important landmarks. The specific benefit derived is a psychological one of a strong sense of orientation within the district. The happy accident of topography of this open space provides a natural amphitheater for contemplating this situation as is evident in the photograph. Policy controlling development around the park's edge and within this viewline should protect and enhance this condition.

LOOKING NORTHWARD OVER DOWNTOWN AND THE SOUTH OF MARKET - 4C

(From the Hall of Justice Roof)

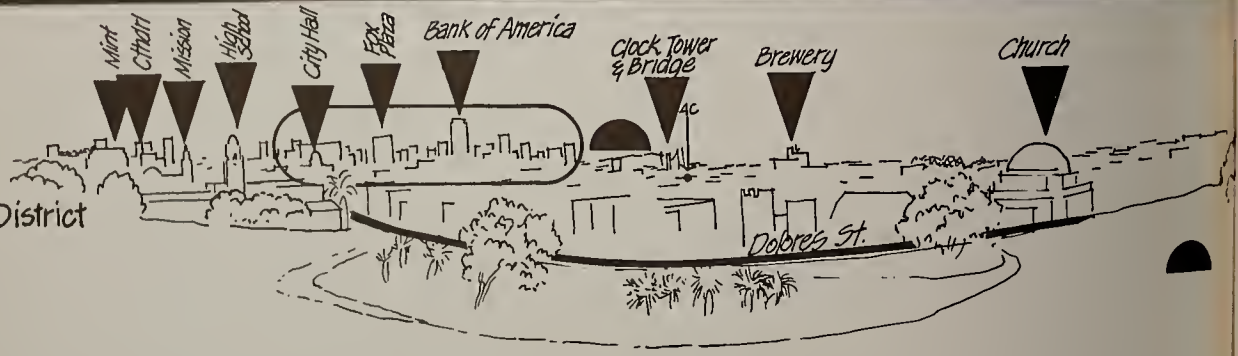
This view shows the long east-west profile of the downtown skyline that was seen in a shorter north-south profile in view 4 A. The central business district, at its present stage of development still shows the degree of cohesiveness discussed earlier. In this view, however, the burgeoning cluster around the Civic Center appears widely separated, as compared to the perspective in 4 A. The Nob Hill cluster of buildings is still seen distinctly, but is in imminent danger of being walled off to view by expansion of the central business district westward along Market Street. This profile of the skyline seems especially important since enormous numbers of people view it daily from the skyway, and it is the profile first presented to visitors arriving from the south. The integrity of the three clusters evident here should be preserved and strengthened. This would require policies controlling height along the middle section of Market Street, as well as careful consideration of new large-scale developments proposed for the south-of-Market area. That area, even at its present scale of development should be the target of special controlling and incentive policies regarding development. Again, it is the foreground for the view that great numbers of people have of the skyline of the heart of San Francisco. Development controls should, at very minimum, be directed toward eliminating the rooftop junkyard so apparent here.

locator map

looking northeast
over Downtown & Mission District
from Corona Heights Playground

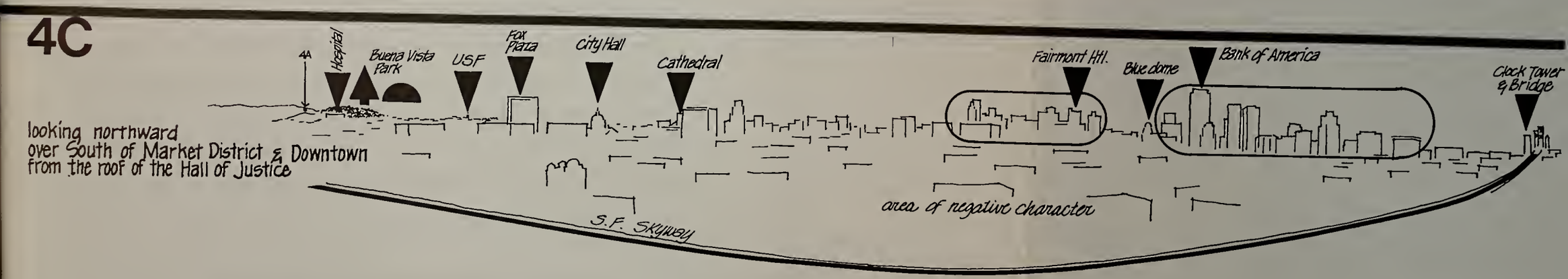
4A

4B



looking northeast
over Downtown & Mission District
from Mission Park

4C



looking northward
over South of Market District & Downtown
from the roof of the Hall of Justice

LOOKING WESTWARD OVER THE SUNSET DISTRICT - 6A

(From Sunset Heights Park)

A view encompassing Parkmerced near the southern edge of the City to Lincoln Park at the northern edge shows a highly uniform pattern of development throughout the entire area. The only variations from this pattern are the very large open spaces. As seen from this vantage point, Stern Grove, on the left, and Golden Gate Park on the right, serve to establish the edges of the Sunset District. These edges appear very clearly at present and should be maintained or reinforced to define this area of unique character within the City. A line of high-rise development at these edges might serve this purpose. On the other hand, spotty high-rise development at these edges might tend to weaken its imageability. Within the district itself, Sunset Reservoir stands out as a large, undeveloped open space totally out of scale with the surrounding development. From this vantage point, its prominent situation on a low ridge is apparent. This location adds greatly to the potential use of this site for some kind of focal development compatible with surrounding scale and taking advantage of the panoramic views available from the site itself. The potential for some kind of focal development is enhanced by the existence of Lincoln High School, which is presently the only landmark building within the district. That building, by its uniqueness, stands discordantly in its setting. A building of this

scale could have been more compatible with some articulation of its facade to reflect the texture of the residential street facades. This should be a consideration for any proposed development on the reservoir site. As an interim solution ot the problem of the reservoir site. As an interim solution to the problem of the reservoir site, a heavier buffer of trees might be appropriate, which could be retained in any development. Heavier landscaping around the high school would soften the visual impact of its massing.

The unrelenting regularity of the street grid is perhaps the uppermost visual problem experienced in this district. With but one exception, there is no expression of any hierarchy of trafficways within the district. The exception is Sunset Blvd. which is marked by its generous landscaping. Some expression of other important streets would be appropriate. The highest priority for such action should be given to Nineteenth Avenue, which, while being one of the most important arterials in the City, is almost totally undistinguishable in views over the district.

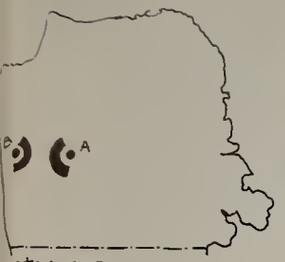
The residential streets themselves make a large part of the image generally held of the Sunset District. Their breadth often seems out of scale with adjoining residential scale, giving a general impression throughout the district of an

excessive amount of asphalt and concrete. More extensive street landscaping could minimize this.

A problem inherent in this preponderance of large street spaces and in looking down their considerable length is that there is a paradoxical feeling, in this otherwise urban enclave, of openness. There is little sense of place here. A high potential exists for restructuring the street pattern to provide closures for public places within the rights-of-way. Such a restructuring could also answer to the problem mentioned earlier of establishing and giving definition to a hierarchical street pattern.

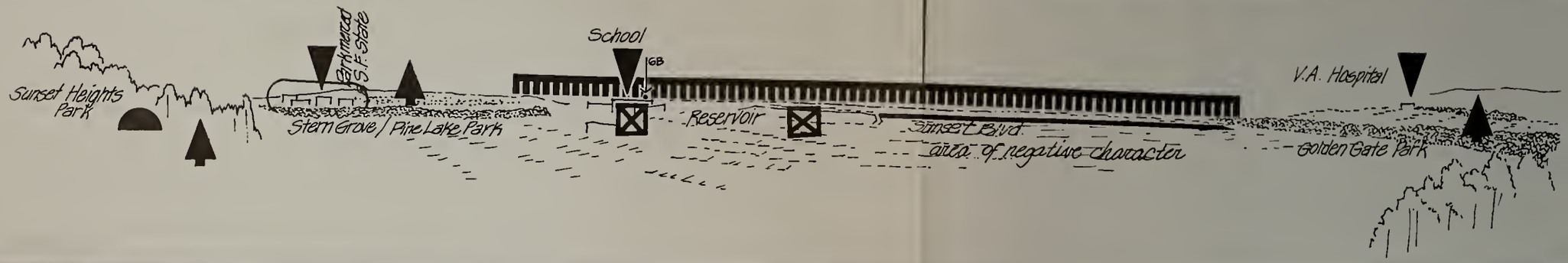
LOOKING EASTWARD OVER THE SUNSET DISTRICT - 6B
(Fron the roof of Lincoln High School)

This view illustrates the line of hills which defines the eastern edge of the Sunset District. These hills serve this and another function in an interior view. They provide the presence of natural landscape elements to inhabitants throughout the district. Views of these hills and toward the ocean provide possibly the most satisfying perceptual experiences within this otherwise visually impoverished area. To preserve this amenity, efforts must be made to restrict further erosion of these open hillsides by more development on them. Also shown in the view is the ridge line extending from these hills in the center of the district. This topographic condition is unexploited by present development pattern, and would be an advantageous location for a cluster of high-rise development for this area, should it be considered appropriate.



ocator map

king westward
r Sunset District
om Sunset Heights Park



6A

6B

king eastward
r Sunset District
om roof of Lincoln High School

LOOKING NORTHWARD OVER INGLESIDE 12A
(From Harold and Grafton Avenue)

This view is totally oriented around the peak of Mt. Davidson. The generally uniform fabric of development if relieved only by penetrations of the line of peaks extending eastward (to the right of the view). These open hills are a satisfying contrast to the otherwise monotonous urban pattern. This view illustrates a pattern of development which is particularly wasteful of open space and should be avoided as a development pattern on any remaining hillsides in the City. The ribbons of housing directly below Mt. Davidson and extending off to the right visually destroy the hillside while providing fewer housing units than the more compact pattern of the lowlands. The interstices between these rows of housing are overly large, unconnected and useless, while providing limited amenity to only the favored housing on the hill. In the lowland, there is a dearth of architectural landmarks. The most visible landmark in the area is exactly in the center of this view -- the reservoir berm adjacent to City College. The monumental scale of this structure is totally out of scale and disruptive to its environs. If massive landscaping or total elimination is unfeasible, perhaps ways could be explored to put a platform on top of it for use as a base of development of compatible scale with the surrounding area. There is the appearance, at least in this view, of a lack of small-scale open spaces throughout the residential areas between the hills. The open hilltops are only visually available to the inhabitants of the area.

LOOKING WESTWARD ALONG ALEMANY BOULEVARD 12B
(From Mission Street overpass)

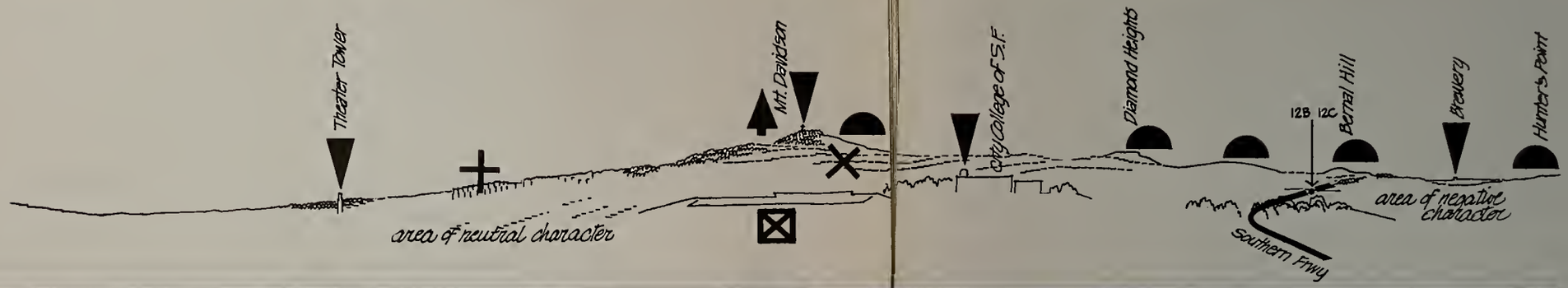
Approaching the general area of the previous view, the prospect of Mt. Davidson and Diamond Heights is a more favorable one. Hillside development is not so far advanced that the integrity of the hill forms is destroyed. Further encroachment upon these hillsides should be avoided. In this view, City College is seen on axis with the Southern Freeway. In the foreground, the housing trapped between Allemany Blvd. and Southern Freeway seems in an inappropriate environment.

LOOKING EASTWARD ALONG ALEMANY BOULEVARD 12C
(From Mission Street Overpass)

Residential development immediately adjacent to the freeway should be minimized, and that which now exists seems inadequately buffered. Hunters Point appears nearly on axis with the highway here. Its hill form would be appropriately emphasized by high-rise development.

cator map

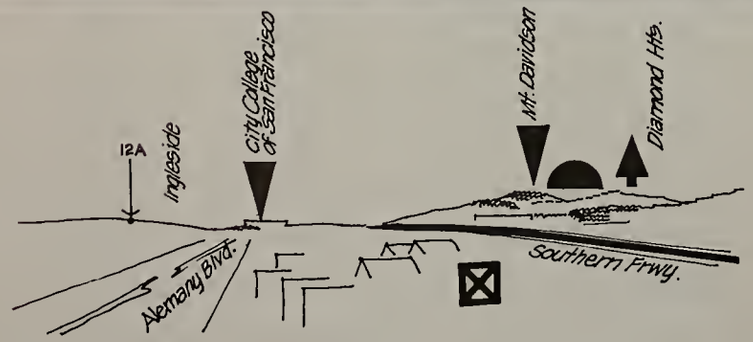
ooking northward
ver Ingleside
from Harold Ave. & Grafton Ave.



12A

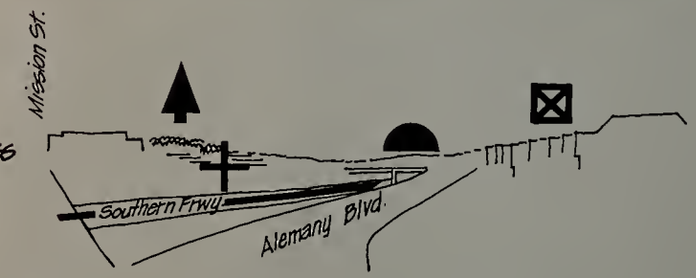
12B

ooking westward
ong Alemany Blvd.
rom Mission St. overpass



12C

looking eastward
along Alemany Blvd.
from Mission St. overpass



LOOKING EASTWARD OVER BAYVIEW DISTRICT
(From 25th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue) 15A

The view is over an unmistakably industrial environment. The foreground edge is clearly defined by the freeway structure. The southern edge -- at the right hand side of the picture -- is established by the hill form and the fine texture of residential development on Hunters Point. This hill, in this advantageous location, seems properly developed in residential use, but the form of the hill seems neither fully exploited or adequately expressed. This location seems particularly suitable for a large concentration of high-rise residential towers. Within the flat industrial area itself, those large landmark structures identified in the panorama adequately characterize the area. More such structures would favorably reinforce the character of the area with careful placement. Individual structures with noteworthy sculptural qualities would best be located where they are standing free of other competing structures. Other large buildings with no individual character are best located in clusters. Too diffuse a pattern of displacement would leave no variety in the skyline of the area which is so visible from the elevated freeways. In the eventuality of large new structural development in this area, care should be exercised in their placement so that they create or maintain view channels from the elevated freeways to the shipping piers. A view of the shipping activity is of prime importance in this view since it provides the most dramatic animation in this scene.

The opportunity to express Islais Creek as an important historic waterway connection to the interior of the City should be exploited as much as possible.

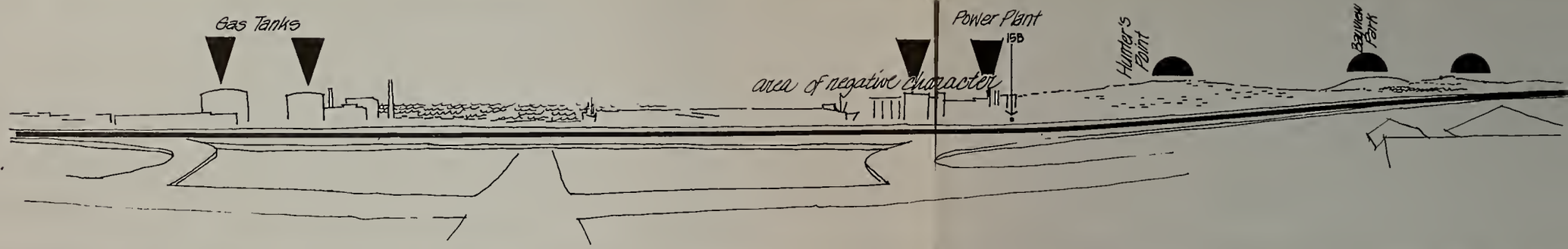
LOOKING WESTWARD ALONG ISLAIS CREEK 15B
(From Third Street Bridge)

This view is available every day to a significant number of people who use Third Street. It illustrates that this waterway, along with India Basin and South Basin are among the most wasted visual resources within the City itself. Whenever an opportunity presents itself, this waterway and others should be reopened to their natural and historical extensions into the interior of the City. The banks of these creeks should be developed as parks to relieve the general drabness of the area. These parks should be developed to serve the recreation needs of workers in the area. Therefore, the form of this development should accommodate cafes, small commercial areas, and plazas for strolling and sitting and watching water activities. Extensions of the stream and development of its banks should include pathway linkages to residential areas now virtually isolated from these water-oriented areas. Such a pathway system could be extended southward toward Hunters Point through incorporation into some general landscaping program for Third Street which is needed to give imageability to this important arterial.

The large gas tank dominating the right side of this view is a

major landmark in the southern part of the City. However, its scale is totally disruptive to the adjoining residential areas on Potrero Hill and severely reduces the potential for development on this side of that hill. An opportunity should be sought to move it to a less disruptive location within the industrial area, or to break down its scale.

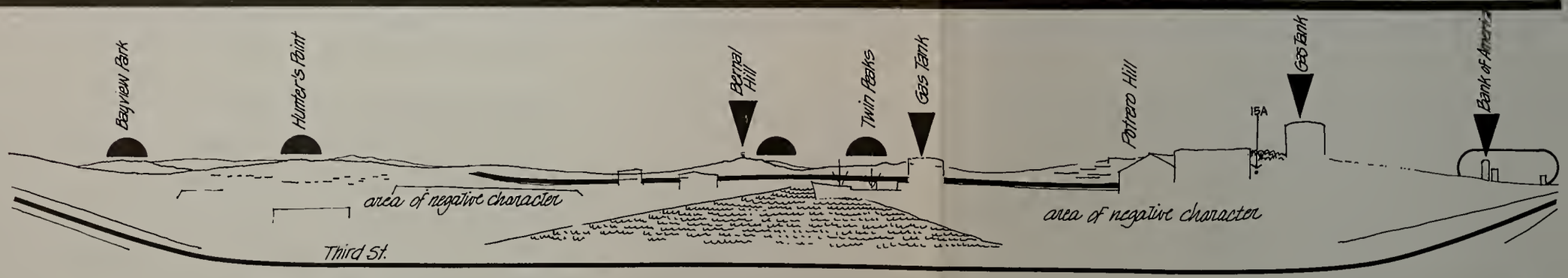
ocator map



oking eastward
er Bayview District
rom 25 St. & Pennsylvania Ave.

15A

15B



oking westward
ong Islais Creek
rom Third St. Bridge

SUMMARY MAP OF VISUAL ELEMENTS OF CITY FORM

In the description of Methodology it was explained that the technique of analysis was to make a visual survey of individual predetermined view districts. To properly evaluate the visual importance of the various form elements within each district, it is necessary to transfer the information from the perspective views to a plan view of their distribution throughout the city. that is the function of this Summary Map. An analysis of distribution and juxtaposition of the basic form-giving elements of the city is the first glimpse of the implied structure of the city that gives the framework upon which to mount any plan for future development. When the distribution of these elements is viewed two-dimensionally, it is possible to give weight to various elements as to their city-wide importance. It should be noted that in the individual panoramas, identified landmarks are given a symbol of equal graphic weight. In this Summary Map three weights are given to that symbol. The heaviest denote landmark elements that appear in several panoramas and therefore are of visual importance over wide areas of the city. The middle weight symbols denote landmarks appearing in more than one panorama, and therefore have significance between view districts. The lightest weight of landmark symbol locates those that appear prominently in only one panorama and therefore are of local importance.

It should also be noted that the symbols signalling appropriate and inappropriate development patterns, and inappropriate building situations are only location markers in this plan and are further commented upon in the following Problems and Potentials Map.

SUMMARY MAP OF VISUAL ELEMENTS OF CITY FORM

- ⊠ DISRUPTIVE BUILDING SITUATION
- × INAPPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT PATTERN
- + APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT PATTERN
- — VISUALLY PROMINENT ROAD
- NATURAL SHORELINE
- UNDEVELOPED HILL
- PROMINENT TREE STAND
- ▼ CITY WIDE LANDMARK
- ▼ DISTRICT LANDMARK
- ▼ LOCAL LANDMARK
- FOCAL AREA

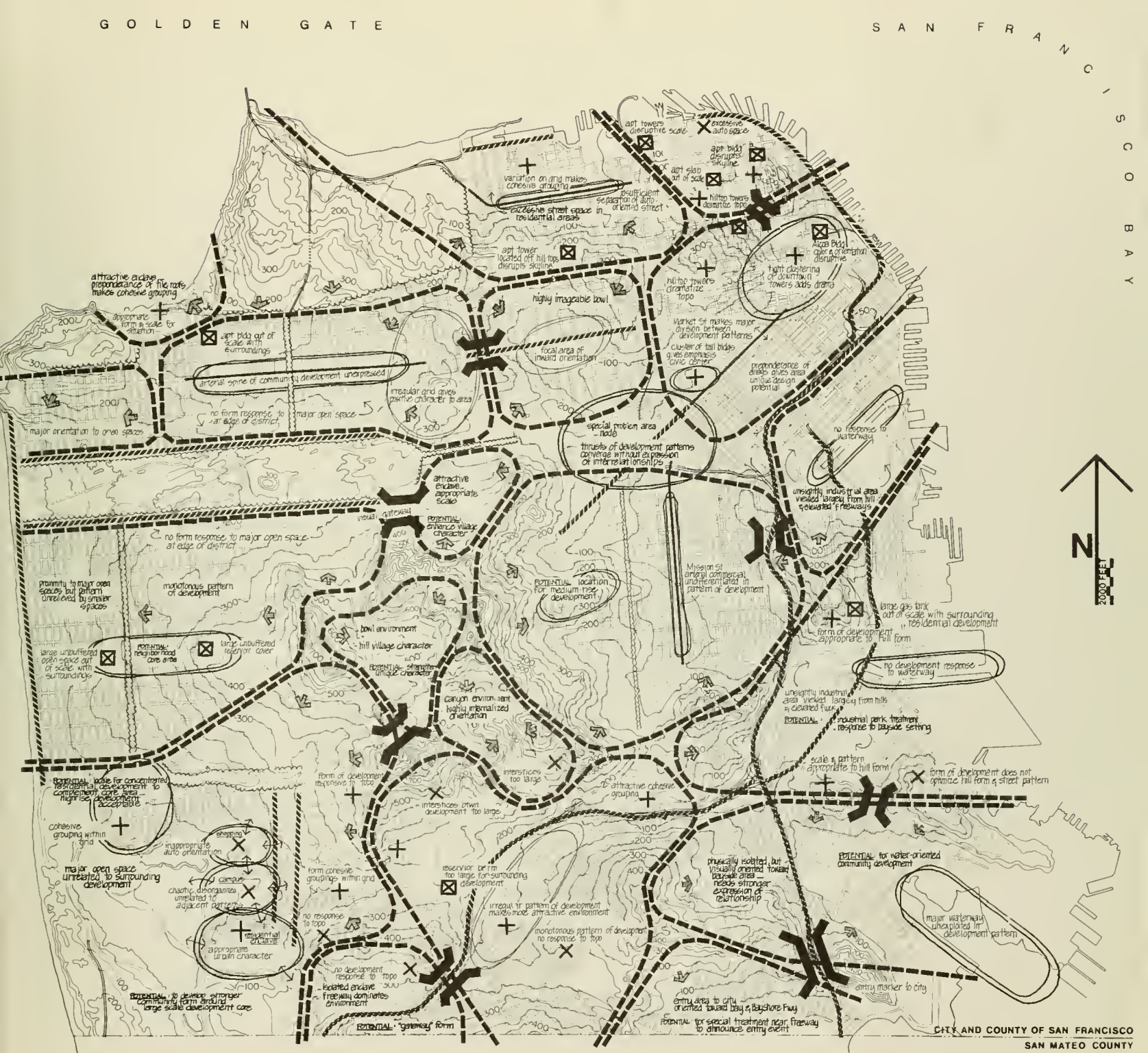
visually prominent area a wide area of the city
visually prominent between adjacent new districts
visually prominent within a new district
area of visual attention

VISUAL PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Analysis of the individual panoramas and the Summary Map suggests some general comments and tentative conclusions about visual problems and potential solutions. Perhaps most apparent in this map is an attempt to subdivide the city into a number of areas that, as a result of the survey, seem to be visually cohesive and are distinct as definable enclaves within the whole fabric of the city. The importance of this attempt is to begin to delineate some districts for specific urban design form studies. The framework for any city-wide urban design plan should maintain the integrity of these enclaves. Many general comments on this map are suggested in the observations stated with each of the individual panoramic surveys. The darker lettering of the map denotes such a statement general to the area. Lighter lettering is a comment of specific nature.

Visual Gateways are elements not identified in the panoramas. Since their importance is primarily a dynamic one -- to the viewer moving between districts -- they are not apparent in those static photographs. Their identification here must necessarily be based upon a general familiarity with the city. Although these gateways might correctly be thought of as specific form elements, their significance is graphically illustrated here when seen in relation to the defined visual enclaves.

The value of survey conclusions graphically represented here is that they begin to specify a structure for urban form. This map in conjunction with the previous Summary Map shows the interrelationship of several definable visual districts within the city and the formal character of each.



VISUAL PROBLEMS AND POTENTIALS

VISUALLY PROMINENT ROAD
VISUAL GATEWAY
LARGE SCALE LANDSCAPING

DISRUPTIVE BUILDING SITUATION
INAPPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT PATTERN
APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

VISUALLY COHESIVE AREA
VISUAL ORIENTATION
AREA OF ATTENTION